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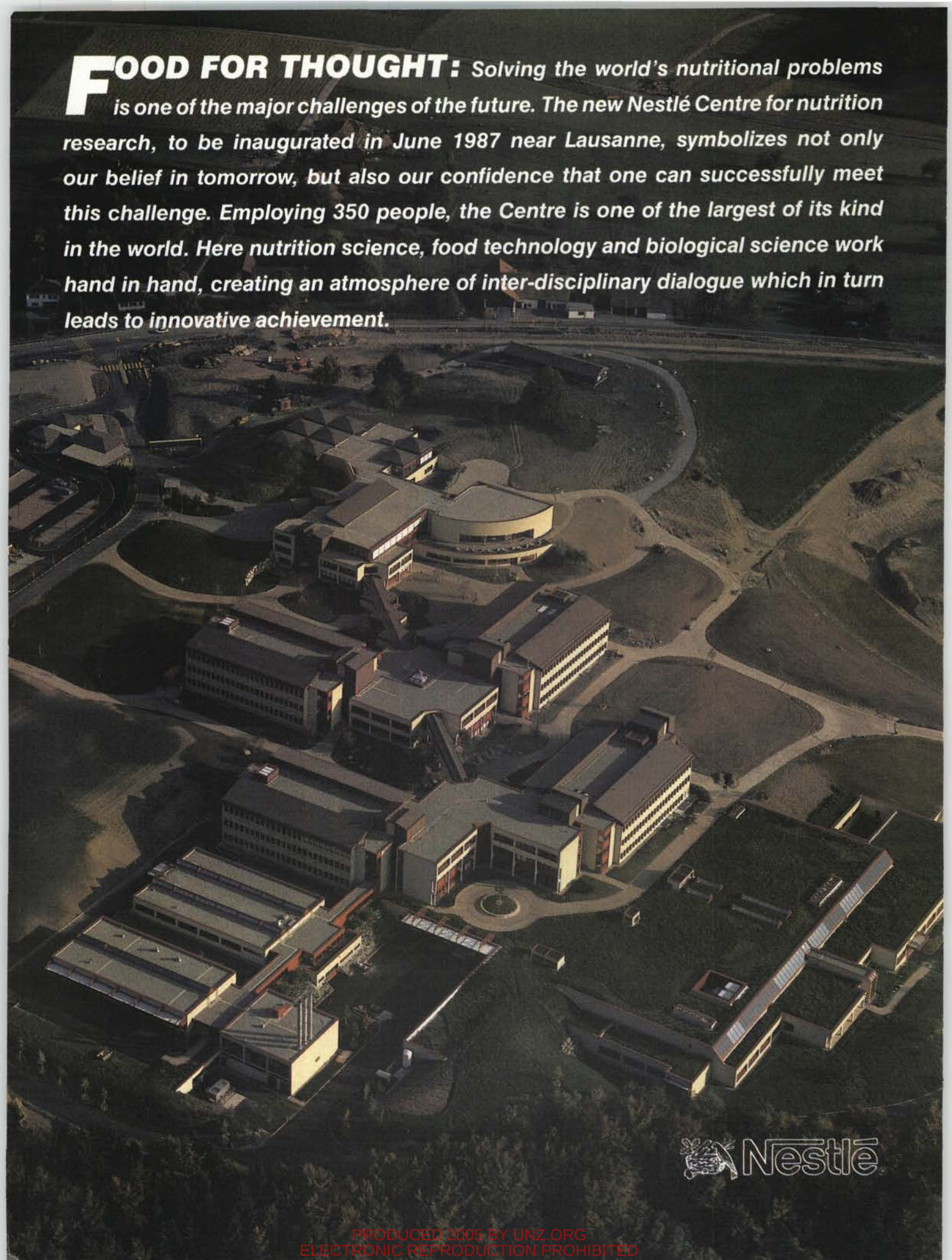
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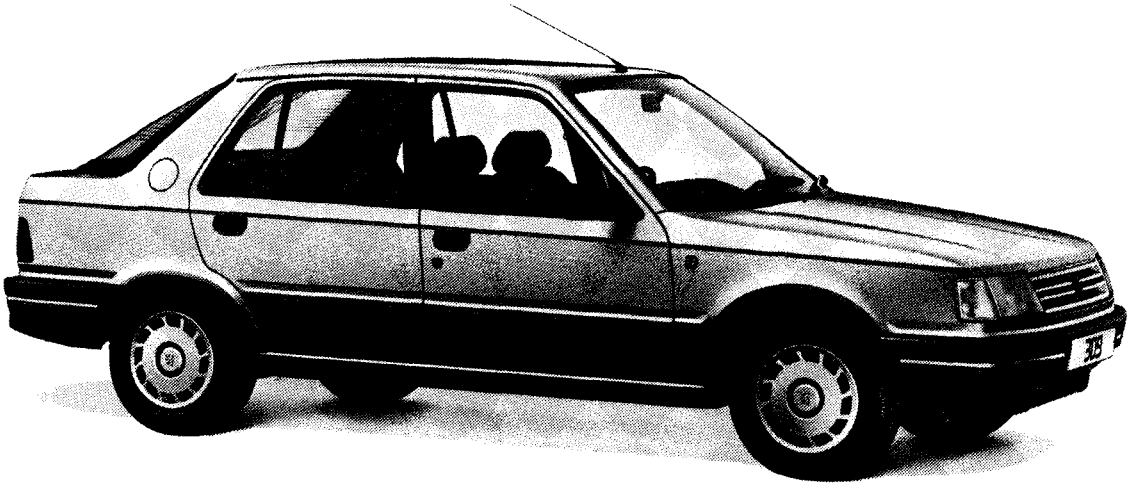

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COLOMBO 1883

BECK'S GETTING LOADED BY COLOMBIANS. (OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY ROUND?).

BREWED IN GERMANY. DRUNK ALL OVER THE WORLD

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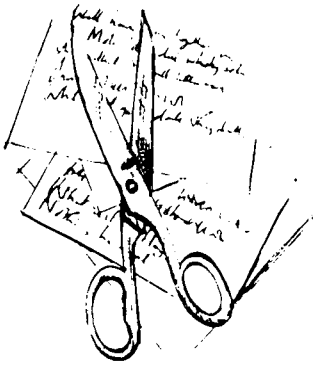
Harvey Tyson

The Duel with the Censors

Letter from Johannesburg



TO VARY the titles of two famous books about South Africa: my beloved country has a very strange society. Strange because, while it produced *apartheid* and legalised racial discrimination, it also produced, as a founding member of the United Nations, one of the first drafts of a Charter on Human Rights. Strange because, though it has a rich mix of peoples, huge natural resources, and the traditions of democracy handed down from Britain and Europe, it is deliberately endangering its own existence, and the priceless heritage it was given. Strange because, though it won press freedom more than 150 years ago and possesses a fiercely independent press which still constantly attacks *apartheid* and authoritarianism, South Africa has more than 100 laws curbing freedom of information—and is into its third "State of Emergency" in less than three years.

It is from this peculiar background of a traditional free press fighting ambivalent but multifarious authoritarianism that I am able to suggest some practical ways of combating censorship. Some of these points are basic to the protection of human rights everywhere. Some are peculiar to the political and legal environment in which the media must try to survive. All of us must accept that a homogeneous nation at peace with itself has very different concerns from those of a society with violently clashing ideologies and cultures.

The first rules in combating censorship is to survive. All of us are occasionally tempted to take the easy and gratifying route of defiance and martyrdom for the cause of a free press. But such simplistic heroics result only in the closure of the paper . . . followed by the silence of the dead and the total triumph of those who seek to black out news.

The second rule is to try (I repeat: try) to remain within the law. Once you deliberately defy the law you destroy your own operating base, as well as the foundation on which press freedom is built. If you abandon that principle, you become part of the chaos that is totalitarianism.

The third rule is to insist that every reporter, wherever he may be in the world, continues to report to his newspaper regardless of all censorship laws. This is to ensure that there is no "self-censorship". The decision to publish should not be affected by political intimidation. It should be decided by a newspaper's editors, who will work out how far they can go in testing the law short of defiant contravention. It is also necessary that the newspaper should be able to indicate to its readers how much of the picture it is prevented from giving them.

The fourth rule is never to acquiesce to censorship, but constantly to test every draconian clause to its limit. My colleague in Cape Town, Tony Heard of the *Cape Times*, was testing—not defying—one of our laws when he deliberately quoted Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress, recently. (Ironically, I was prosecuted and found guilty for quoting Tambo by mistake!) Right now my newspaper is spending hundreds of hours of editorial effort and thousands of dollars in legal opinions to test the censorship laws several times a day. (I shall come back to our specific anti-censorship techniques.)

The fifth universal rule for an independent, moderate paper is that not only must the newspaper have the *will* to fight censorship relentlessly, it must seek and deserve the support of its readers in doing so. It must try to maintain accurate, balanced reporting even when political conflict seeks to deny it this right. A major newspaper under siege—as the late, great *La Prensa* of Argentina discovered in the 1950s—must maintain its moderate principles (and thus its readership support) to the bitter end. Shouting and protesting are not enough. One has to demonstrate the press's dedication to fairness and to averting violence. One has to be satisfied that one's newspaper can validly reject the inevitable accusations that it is encouraging murder—either by "inciting revolutionaries" on the one hand, or condoning official brutality on the other.

IN *recent issues of* ENCOUNTER *we featured material on South Africa: Sir Woodrow Wyatt's "A Necklace for Azania" and Melvin J. Lasky's "Evelyn Waugh & the Dream of Azania" (September-October 1986); also Jean-François Revel's "South Africa Adrift: A French View" (December).*

HARVEY TYSON *is Editor-in-Chief of the daily newspaper "The Star" in Johannesburg.*

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In short, democratic newspapers need to remain democratic, even in combating extremism.

ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS to newsmen in South Africa is that they may become so battered and bewildered by successive waves of regulations that they cease to fight or uphold their standards. Our first anti-censorship step was taken years ago, therefore, with this pressure and erosion in mind. *The Star* created a "Code of Standards" which we promised publicly to aspire to at all times—or to tell our readers when we could not.

Recently we had publicly to strike from our Code the clause which said that we would tell readers how and where we were censored—the regulations specifically forbid us to do so. We also named six of our other principles which were in jeopardy through censorship. These included balance, fairness, and our promise to uphold the rights of those who were denied the vote.

This move had two effects. It sharpened the awareness of our journalists about the dangers they must combat. And it jolted our readers, some of whom were very angry—not with the Government, but with us for "rocking the boat".

The second step was to challenge in court the State's regulations. Fortunately South Africa still has remnants of a very sound judiciary, combining the best of British precedents and Roman-Dutch traditions. For nearly three decades judges tended to take the side of the State in conflicts over individual rights; but this has been replaced in some Supreme Courts by an activist protection of the elements of rule of law. The Courts have, after our legal appeals, prevented the Government from implementing some of the media restrictions and penalties.

A third step was to test the censorship machine itself. Initially we asked ourselves two questions. Should we submit about half of the million words we process every day—thus jamming the works and demonstrating how impractical State censorship is? Or should we submit nothing? In the end we decided to submit only those reports which clearly contravened the regulations. This in itself allowed us to get round the law, for though we were not able to indicate what was censored, we could quote the authorities—and we quote them every time they refuse to let us publish.

Just as I left for a visit to London, we decided to test the law by publishing advertisements that quote Nelson Mandela and his predecessor, the late Albert Luthuli. We allowed the partially restricted United Democratic Front to use our columns to call for the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela. The fact that we have supported those calls in our editorial columns in the past is beside the point. The principle at stake was the right of all people to have their say. But the moment we published the advertisement the Government passed a special regulation banning further publication. We challenged the legality of this in the Supreme Court—we won the case. But the finding has left us with very little room to manoeuvre: we are unlikely again to be able to publish freely what any anti-*apartheid* advertiser may wish to say.

All opposition newspapers continue to attack the Government and demand a change. The former Deputy Editor of my newspaper, who lives in the country in retirement, wrote the other day to say how surprised he was at seeing in our editions so much news which he thought we could not publish.

THIS RAISES ONE OF several dilemmas that face any newspaper that actively fights censorship. The first is that the public, seeing "business as usual" in the paper, grows relaxed about the existence of official, wide-sweeping censorship—or readers assume that there must be other major issues that are unreported.

The dilemma is that while we may be performing fairly well in the circumstances, we make no boasts. To do so would lead to false confidence on the part of readers—and action by the censors. Instead we carry a front-page headline each day that reads:

THIS NEWSPAPER MAY BE CENSORED
WE ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TELL YOU HOW OR WHERE

Unfortunately, the majority of readers, black and white, remain passive—and the vociferous ones are the minority who are hostile to the Press. In order to alert moderates of all races, we are devising new methods of discussing censorship actions—without contravening the clause which says we may not.

Another dilemma is that the "State of Emergency" climate in itself prevents information from getting out. Thus, we are now having to "reactivate" all contacts and sources who used to provide information in normal times. We find that many of them are already in jail, as is the editor of one newspaper, and several reporters (said to be involved in "terrorist activities", but who have not been charged).

A third dilemma is that we may have to drive reporters to write stories against their will—knowing that it is they who could be in jeopardy, not we editors. Reporters are not so much fearful of State retribution as they are reluctant to work at stories which they believe will go straight "on the spike", or under the censors' blue pencil. It is difficult, because we on the editorial floor know the reporter faces the threat of a "*205*", a legal clause which demands that you reveal your frightened sources, or go to jail yourself.

FINALLY, ONE HAS TO ASK ONESELF whether it is worth being a journalist under these circumstances. I speak for all my colleagues when I say that they have come to understand that, far from being redundant in a closed society, the role of newspapers has never been more crucial—even though it is becoming almost impossible to nail abuse of power; or to know whether the press is still, by one means or another, publishing most of the relevant truths.

Fighting censorship under these circumstances needs guile, stamina, stubbornness, and even a sense of humour.

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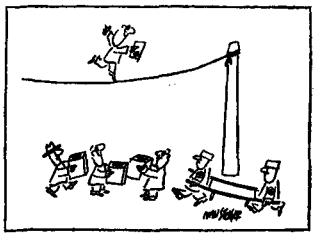
John Ardagh

Life in the Other Germany

Faces & Façades in the East (II)



HOW FAR the average East German citizen feels irked by the lack of freedom of expression is not easy to assess. One West German diplomat in East Berlin suggested to me that it is not felt as the worst of deprivations: "Remember that there has been no democracy here since before 1933, so even the older generation has no clear idea of what it is like. Sometimes people ask me, 'Why on earth do you permit those Leftist demos at Frankfurt airport, or the neo-Fascist meetings? It's shocking!'—and I try to explain that democracy must mean giving freedom of speech to those you disapprove of, or else you are on a slippery slope. They do not always get the point."

Others, more sophisticated or better attuned to Western ideas, certainly do feel cramped by the curbs on free speech and political choice. However, they have recently grown a little more relaxed about talking freely in public or to strangers, now that officialdom has become a shade more tolerant. But they still set limits on what they say. They know that nowadays you can get away with airing grievances about the inconveniences of daily living that affect everyone, or about bureaucratic slip-ups in some office or factory. But if you voice basic dissent about Socialism, or Honecker, or the Soviet ally, or defence policy, you may well be in serious trouble if a security agent overhears you or if someone informs on you—as still happens. "Twenty years ago they'd send you to prison", said a student I met. "Today you merely lose your job, or get banished to some remote place or forced to emigrate. An improvement, I suppose. . . ."

While criticism is still taboo in the mass media, it is sanctioned within limits in satiric cabaret, where it reaches smaller audiences and is thus less "dangerous". Cabaret of this kind has a potent tradition in Germany—especially in Berlin. Today it is on the wane in West Germany, where there are so many other forums for attacking the follies of government; but in the GDR it provides a rare if modest outlet for national self-mockery and the release of pent-up frustrations, and so it flourishes—and is accepted by the régime as licensed court jesters might be.

East Berlin's best-known satiric cabaret, the State-run *Distel* (*Thistle*), opposite the Friedrichstrasse station, is a venerable institution. Much frequented by tourists from the West, and even by local *Freie Deutsche Jugende* groups and GDR soldiers in uniform, it is very much an Establishment affair, but it does have sparkle. In its ugly, cramped theatre, brilliant performers go through the nightly ritual of lampooning East German life as best they dare, with scripts vetted in advance. The show I attended gave me some idea of how far their satire can go.

A sales-girl looks at the dead flies in a State shop-window and says, "I'd like to clear them away but it's not my job to do so and I daren't", so she lets them lie there. A boss trying to sack an incompetent worker tells him, "Don't worry, however much of a dud you are you'll get another job. In the West, no one would hire an idiot like you."

In a factory about to receive a visit from a top Party man, the workers tell their union leader. "Let's explain to him our real problem." "No, that's impossible", he says, "you must talk to the comrade optimistically, like on television." So they play the visitor a banal recorded TV discussion and silently mouth the words. In another factory sketch, called *Erich is coming*, the normally lazy but now panic-stricken workers are frenziedly preparing to work hard because Honecker is about to pay a visit. Rich West German tourists in the GDR are satirised in a number about an arrogant couple in a white Mercedes, visiting relatives: "What a bore, having to bring them all these presents. But we don't want Reunification, do we? The Turks are quite enough, we don't need Saxons too."

Lastly, and most pointedly, workers are shown erecting a huge poster in a GDR football stadium, to advertise an Italian fruit juice, Granini, for a match that will be televised

JOHN ARDAGH, *a former staff correspondent of "The Times" in Paris, is a freelance writer on French and European subjects for the BBC, "The Times", "The Sunday Times", "The Guardian", and other newspapers. He is the author of many books on France, of which the best known is "France in the 1980s" (Secker & Warburg and Penguin Books, 1982). His devotion to "Europeanism" led him to a change of focus with his new book, "Germany and the Germans" (published on 16 April by Hamish Hamilton); it is based on ten months spent recently in the two Germanies and was researched with the collaboration of Katharina Schmitz (who is now his wife). The articles in this and the preceding issue of* ENCOUNTER *are excerpted from a section on East Germany.*

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A cross-section of our growth, past, present and future.

May we ask you a couple of questions?

One. Which do you think is the most useful invention of the past hundred years or so?

Two. Which do you think will grow fastest in the next fifty?

You're bound to consider the internal combustion engine, the aeroplane, atomic energy and the microchip, of course. But how about telecommunications?

You have to admit there's a case to be made for them, and it's timely to make it now.

It'll take a short history lesson but we promise to make it as painless as possible.

1866, the Entrepreneur.

The founder of Cable and Wireless was a rather vigorous and determined entrepreneur called John Pender.

In 1866 he was responsible for laying the first transatlantic submarine cable.

With the dots and dashes of the Morse Code, it meant the United Kingdom was only a few minutes away from the eastern seaboard of the United States (Stock Exchange and Wall Street closing prices were transmitted daily).

By the end of the century he'd created a submarine cable empire that virtually covered the world and stretched for fifty thousand miles.

Unending success beckoned? Not exactly.

1920's, the Italian.

A young Italian scientist called Marconi had earlier patented his radio device and now offered a transatlantic telegraph service (the one which brought Crippen to trial).

It was three times faster than cable at about one twentieth of the cost.

Marconi made the British government an offer they couldn't refuse: that his telegraph service and our cable assets be merged.

It was a happy marriage which, helped by the new technology, prospered even during the depressed thirties.

1950's, the voice.

Then in the mid 1950's the first coaxial cable was laid across the Atlantic, carrying distant voices. (Though you still had to queue-up to make a call.)

But the pace of innovation was quickening.

Rockets placed satellites in space, to and from which we bounce messages on 44,000 mile journeys between our earth stations round the world.

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Next came larger coaxials, then the miraculous fibre-optic cable carrying voice and data at the speed of light (the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica in a flash).

Now, computers and microwaves all play their part, but our real growth as a company has accelerated in the past four years.

1981, the new freedom.

In 1981 the government privatised us in its belief that companies flourish when managers are free to act in an entrepreneurial spirit (shades of John Pender).

We are proud to say we have repaid its trust.

Mid-1980's, the explosion.

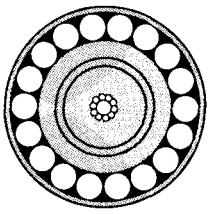
There's nothing new in people's urge to communicate of course. But as international business has grown, this urge has now assumed unprecedented proportions.

Just about every country in the world is expanding and updating its telecommunications. And new technology is constantly needed to make systems faster, cheaper and more effective over greater distances.

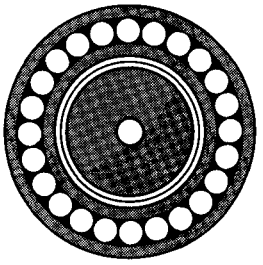
Currently in fact, we're improving and maintaining systems in some thirty-six countries.

In Hong Kong we operate both its internal and external telecommunications systems.

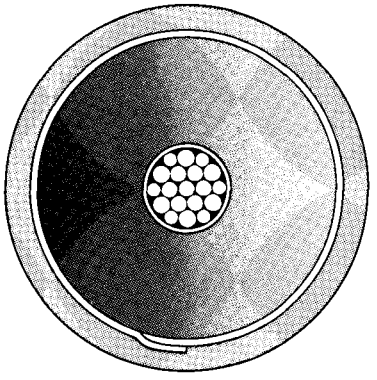
During 1985 we agreed with China to study together the feasibility of establishing up-to-date telecommunications between the main cities of the Yangtze Delta.



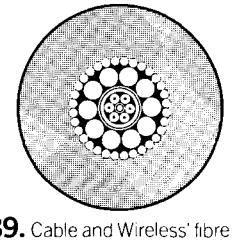
1866. First successful transatlantic cable. Roughly six months to transmit the Bible by Morse Code.



1956. First coaxial cable across the Atlantic. Thirty-six circuits bring phone calls as we know them today.



1974. Over 1,800 circuits queuing eliminated.



1989. Cable and Wireless' fibre-optic cable to America. 12,000 circuits able to transmit the Encyclopaedia Britannica in a few zips of light.

Meanwhile, in America we've laid fibre-optic cable along the railroad from Dallas to Houston and we are operating circuits from New York to Washington and soon, Chicago.

In Barbados we are co-operating with the government to bring the latest digital communications to the island and help its main industry, tourism.

In Bahrain, we have a 40% stake in one of the most advanced telecommunications services in the Middle East and we manage the entire system.

While in 1984, our ships laid a submarine cable linking Australia and New Zealand with Canada via Fiji and Hawaii – eight thousand miles in all.

The long-term view.

We hope we have shown how Cable and Wireless has grown bigger as the world, in communication terms, has grown smaller.

However, if you would like to know more, write to the Press Office, Cable and Wireless plc, Mercury House, Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8RX.

Cable and Wireless.

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to the West: "That'll net the GDR 10,000 DM", says one of them. "That's how we sell our principles to earn hard currency."

Other sketches poked fun at the clumsiness of bureaucracy, the consumer shortages (inevitably), and the general apathy. So it is possible for cabarets to satirise people's behaviour "under Socialism" and their failure to live up to its demanding challenges, or even (more daringly) to chide the régime for compromising its own ideals. But these are not so much attacks on Socialism itself as on the shortfall in achieving it. No cabaret can safely question the System or the Leadership, or make jokes about foreign policy or the Russians, or indulge in the kind of personal gossip about politicians that is the common coinage of satire in the West.

Much the same applies in the provinces, save that some of the small intellectual cabarets there can afford to be a little more outspoken, since they are less in the limelight than *Die Distel*. In Leipzig, at the *Akademixer*, I sat in a lively, crowded, studenty atmosphere and listened to a talented young cast making clever word-play about Party hypocrisies and the gulf between reality and the official version of things. The audience was tense and expectant, as at a sporting contest, which in a sense it was: in the GDR, people go to a satiric cabaret for the thrill of finding out just how far the actors will dare to go. Even in these little places, scripts must be authorised, and sometimes they get censored. But there is also some improvisation—and this, if the secret police should happen to be sitting in the hall, can be quite a game of Russian roulette for producer and cast.

THE GDR SECRET POLICE has admittedly become less oppressive than it was in Ulbricht's day: but behind the smooth façade it still keeps a close and watchful grip, and people do their best to keep clear of it. In the town of Schwerin, in 1985, a drunken policeman had an argument with three men in the street and fired shots at them. None of the onlookers would lift a finger to help, for they felt the men must have done something terribly wrong, and it was best not to get involved. They were left lying in the road and two of them later died. This is the kind of story one hears. The uniformed police are far more prevalent than in the West, and though generally polite they will quickly turn to rough-handling any citizen who answers back or fails to obey an order smartly. There may perhaps be another side to this.

> "Our kindly police force [one Communist told me] have a secondary *de facto* role as social workers. They keep a close watch on local families, and if, say, they notice that a father is drinking too much or hitting his children, they will report him."

This may well help to reduce the spread of cruelty or child neglect: but such prying certainly has another and less laudable function too. Any citizen, however blameless, has a police dossier where reports from his school and workplace are included, and where any little unorthodox things that he may have said or done at any time will be entered too, and might be quoted against him years later.

This may all sound rather sinister and *1984*-ish. But except in a very few cases the police system is no longer used arbitrarily. So long as he sticks to the rules and does nothing wrong "politically" (not always so easy), a citizen can expect to be treated fairly by the law, in a police state that is highly legalistic in the true German manner, and anxious to be seen to be behaving legally. Ordinary people are frequently too ignorant or submissive to make proper use of their legal rights: but, if they do so, they will generally get justice. I heard of a young man who had a motorbike accident that was largely his own fault. The police confiscated his licence, and there followed weeks of silence. A lawyer friend advised him to telephone the police's legal department. He did so, and quickly got a response and a fair trial.

The Army, like the police, is much in evidence. The 380,000 Soviet troops stationed in East Germany keep a low profile, and though you see their convoys on the main roads, the soldiers seldom wander around the towns or mix with the local population. But the GDR's own army is displayed as much as possible, and is closely meshed into the life of a nation that today is decidedly more militaristic than the Federal Republic.

The National People's Army, with 115,000 men, plus 50,000 border guards and 52,000 in the Navy and Air Force, is not especially large by Warsaw Pact standards, but it is highly modern and efficiently armed. Some 55% of its strength is made up of conscripts who do 18 months' service. When they enlist they are first taken to Buchenwald concentration camp to swear their oath, and are then carefully indoctrinated in the "anti-imperialist struggle", for one day they might have to fight against fellow-Germans. Controversially, their pre-military training will have started some years earlier, at a very young age. Children as young as eleven to fourteen are encouraged to attend "defence education" classes in school, where they are taught about the role of the Army and the wartime heroism of Communists. Then para-military training, including marksmanship, is compulsory for boys of fifteen and sixteen, and apprentices and school-children of seventeen and eighteen are obliged to attend summer camps where they take part in field manoeuvres and shooting exercises. At a Defence *Spartakiad* in Halle in 1985, girls as well as boys were seen stripping machine-guns and hurling themselves into trenches.

The aim of this early training is twofold: first, to prepare conscripts for their national service, thus adding to their later usefulness as fighting men; and, secondly, to imbue them with national and military feeling at an age when they are still malleable. The martial indoctrination of the very young has annoyed a great many parents, and in recent years the Protestant Church has protested vehemently and repeatedly to the authorities against the growth of military education in schools—but so far to little effect.

As well as the regular armed forces, the GDR also keeps a large part-time militia of some 400,000 men. Each factory and office of any size has its own militia unit, comprised of some 20% of its male workforce: these men are volunteers, led by *SED* (Socialist United Party) activists, and at weekends you see them out in the countryside in their grey uniforms, doing field training. This militia was set up after the strikes of June

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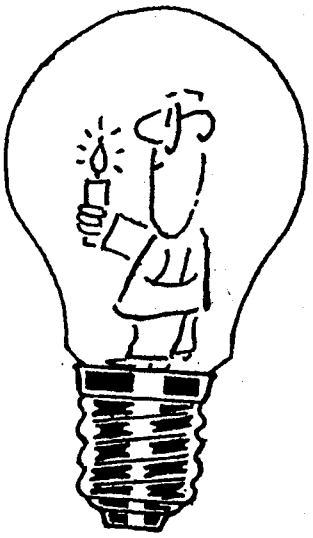
1953, with the aim of providing cadres to forestall any future workers' uprisings—and this internal security role, as a back-up to the police, is still its main purpose today.

"If only the Poles in 1980 had possessed a militia like ours", one *SED* man told me unblinkingly, "they might well have spared themselves all that trouble with the *Solidarity* counter-revolutionaries." I gulped. Few other features of the GDR system struck me as more unpleasant.

The Intellectual Dissidents



PARTY WATCHDOGS are also on the alert against rumbles of dissidence in the cultural field. Here in the past 30 or so years quite a number of writers, artists, and other intellectuals have been harassed, censored, denied publication, expelled from the country, or in a few cases put in prison. But the régime's policy has been strangely erratic, even capricious. At some times quite a degree of open criticism or non-conformism has been allowed; at others the clamp-down has been heavy, for example in the later 1970s when several well-known writers were exiled, including the poet and singer Wolf Biermann. The GDR's overall record is about average for Eastern Europe—more oppressive than Poland or Hungary, less so than the Soviet Union, Romania, or post-1968 Czechoslovakia. While some writers have been expelled, others have left of their own accord; and they tend to accept exile much more readily than Hungarians, Poles, or other Slavs, for the obvious reason that in West Germany they are still in their own culture and can find a responsive readership in their own language. This puts the régime in a dilemma. Some writers it is glad to be rid of; but for prestige reasons it is sorry to lose too many, for it is proud of the country's literary record.

After the mild cultural thaw of the first Honecker years, the period of repression in the later 1970s appeared somewhat paradoxical, for Honecker was simultaneously liberalising in some other fields—in his relations with the Church, in encouraging private property, and so on. But clearly the Politburo held the view that disaffected intellectuals were especially dangerous: given an inch, they might take a mile, and their influence could easily spread.

Günter Kunert left of his own choice in 1979, and he and his wife now live in the Holstein countryside, where I went to see them. He is a frail-looking, sensitive man in his mid-fifties, and besides writing poetry and criticism he produces vividly-coloured expressionist paintings.

"I am Jewish from my mother's side and have always been on the Left, so at first I welcomed the East German régime and was delighted to live there. But gradually things began to get difficult. My poems are on very private themes, and I just could not turn out the kind of ideological 'public' poetry they wanted; also one *Leitmotiv* of mine is the de-humanising effect of modern technology, and Marxism does not tolerate this kind of pessimism. The Party harassed me and finally refused to publish me. But I had contacts in West Germany, where my books were being well received, partly *because* people knew that I was in trouble in the GDR. And after the Wall was built the authorities continued to let me go out, for lecture tours and so on—I suppose they did not want to appear too illiberal.

So I benefited from the same kind of paradox as Wolf Biermann—oppression at home led to notoriety in the West, which then provided an escape from the oppression! My break with GDR-style socialism was a slow and painful process, since I'd believed in it so much—and I still think the régime has many virtues, but not for an artist. Finally we decided to move here, and it was no culture shock at all. I'm still a GDR citizen, I have an exit visa and can pay return visits when I wish."

Another émigré poet, Reiner Kunze, said that a young engineer he knew was sentenced to six years in prison for supplying him with information which he used in his book about the plight of youth in the GDR, *Die Wunderbaren Jahre* (*The Lovely Years*), published in the West. This in fact is one of the worst sins in the eyes of the régime: to use West German media outlets for "insulting" the GDR.

Today the situation has quietened down, for the most hostile writers have now left and those remaining are more discreet—but not all of them. The most striking exception is the veteran Stefan Heym, now in his mid-seventies, who is tolerated as a kind of licensed dissident, too old and venerable to be openly victimised or thrown out.

I visited him in East Berlin, in his villa on the pleasantly-named Rabindranath-Tagore-Strasse, in the verdant suburb of Grünau—a large, humorous man with a mischievous, puckish grin and a mock-arrogance that made a charming contrast to the usual GDR solemnity.

"I am the greatest and the only Social Realist, for I alone describe the truth and know that true socialism will one day come to pass on this earth. Yes, I continue to publish in Frankfurt and Munich, and they don't touch me under their stupid law—they daren't, they know the stink it would cause in the West. People smuggle in copies, so I am read here quite widely. And other writers have benefited from my courage, for they too defy the law and get away with it. So, you see, this is a very mild, scared little dictatorship. Their image took such a punishing internationally over the Biermann affair that never again will they expel or imprison a writer, I'm sure. But they keep close tabs on me. They'll know that you've come to see me here. . . ."

Critical books in the GDR are generally given very limited print runs, so they sell out rapidly in the shops and then

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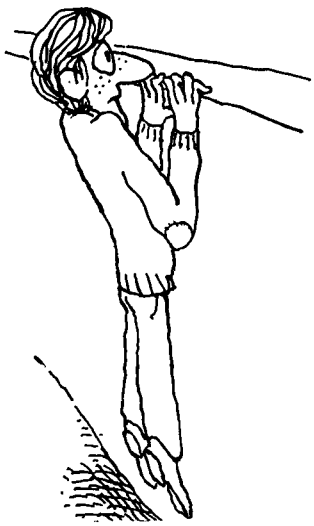
circulate from hand to hand like rare editions: it is the opposite of the Western best-seller system. There is an acute paper shortage, and the Ministry officials who decide these things see no reason to squander the precious supplies on "renegade" novelists. On the other hand, those who write the kind of books officially in favour are assured of large sales and in some cases are given State salaries and other special privileges. But in some other respects there has been an easing up recently, at least as regards the publication of certain classic authors previously taboo under Marxism-Leninism. Freud, once the great enemy, is now permitted; so are Kafka, Joyce, and Proust. And in 1985 I found the régime girding itself up to publish Nietzsche, of all people, formerly considered a "forerunner of Nazism", as well as *The Tin Drum* by Günter Grass, an author whose outspoken anti-Communism had till now led him to be banned (unlike the works of Heinrich Böll which have long been much more acceptable). Under comradely pressure from Moscow, the Party still draws the line at Solzhenitsyn. "And quite right too", one *SED* lady told me. "Why should we waste our paper on that CIA-inspired rubbish? No one here would want to read him, anyway."

To the Western Frontier



THE NOTORIOUS division of the German nation is marked physically on the GDR side by a fortification of great depth and complexity that winds for 870 miles from the Baltic to Czechoslovakia. Today there are nine regular access routes by road across the border and four by rail. The division of Germany has severed about 160 other roads and 25 railway lines, and it has separated communities that had lived together for centuries. In at least four cases, the barrier goes through the heart of a village or between adjacent villages so that former neighbours can see each other only by making a long detour and meeting somewhere inside East Germany. By a special GDR dispensation, West Germans living within about 50 kilometres of the border are allowed to make up to 36 day-trips a year to visit friends or relatives on the other side. As the crossings are few, this can be a laborious process. Often their loved ones are simply not there any more, since the GDR Government for security reasons has evicted nearly all the inhabitants from a zone within five kilometres of the border. Whole villages have been erased, and farming goes on under tight military supervision.

On the Western side, there are few feelings of tension any more: "The border's there, it's like living beside a cliff or deep river . . . we hardly notice it, and we've stopped wondering about life on the other side", said one peasant woman. At Lübeck, the only big West German town very close to the border, in the past ten years or so some middle-class suburban villas have been built within 200 metres of it and—amazingly—the land and house prices here are little lower than anywhere else.

If most of the border zone today is serene and prosperous, there are some poorer upland areas or salients half-enclosed by GDR territory that still suffer badly from the loss of their natural hinterland; and, though farms and other businesses in rural districts within a belt some 40 kilometres deep from the border are granted Federal subsidies to compensate for their difficulties, these are not always adequate. In one particularly isolated pocket of northern Bavaria I found Ludwigstadt the most sad and derelict-looking little town that I have ever come across in West Germany; it has lost all its links with adjacent Thuringia, its industries are moribund, its unemployment high.

Some 3,000 East German guards have defected across the border since the War, so now they patrol in pairs or groups and are carefully screened for their political reliability.

> "It's a rum business [said a senior officer of the *Bundesgrenzschutz*, the Federal frontier police]; they peer at us through their field-glasses and hide in the bushes, but they're forbidden to smile or even respond to a wave, let alone utter a word. If they do, they are heavily punished. Here we all are, fellow-Germans in uniform, playing deaf-mute with each other across the years—crazy! Their security is rigorous. Last year when they were levelling some ground between the two fences, there were two workers watched over by eight soldiers with guns. . . ."

How do the GDR leaders explain away the 103-mile wall around Berlin? It is not easy. Everyone knows why the monstrosity was built, and as most Party men tend to be embarrassed about it (just as Ulbricht himself was), they talk about it as little as possible. Sometimes they feel obliged to try to justify what is still known officially as "the Anti-Fascist Protection Wall". One recent GDR publication states that it was put up "to preserve peace in Europe", while as recently as 1985 an East Berlin newspaper wrote that the building of it has been "vital to head off Western invasion plans and attempts to drain the economy. The soldiers on guard watch that no one from the West comes here to hinder the building of our Socialist state. . . ." But, as thousands of Westerners daily enter the GDR quite freely, this argument is patently nonsense. A more sophisticated justification that I heard was, "Socialism takes time to be perfected, and in the meantime we must protect ourselves against disruptive influences." Or, much nearer the truth: "We have expensively trained many key people who are wooed by the West with higher salaries, and until we are stronger we just cannot afford to let them leave."

After *Ostpolitik* had led to the East-West agreements of 1971-72, matters were greatly eased and since then almost any West German has been free to enter the GDR for up to 30 days a year. The number of annual visits rose sharply after

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1972, and they now average about 3.7 million a year from the Federal Republic and another 3 million from West Berlin. It is estimated that as many as 90% of these travellers have relatives or close friends in the GDR, and in very many cases they stay with them in their homes. After 40 years of division, roughly one West German in three still possesses a contact of this kind in the East, though inevitably the kinship ties are weakening as close relatives die and the links become more frequently those between cousins than between brothers or sisters.

Some other people travel to the GDR on business or purely for tourism, while just a few go with the feeling that they have a moral duty to keep in touch with fellow-Germans deprived of their freedom and needing their support. One middle-aged civil servant in Hamburg told me that he goes at least once a year in this spirit, and now most of his friends live in the GDR. He is doing something of value, for GDR citizens will frequently stress to their Western friends, "Please do not leave us isolated. Come and see us as often as you can, we're so grateful for it." Usually they will talk quite freely to those they trust. Before my own visits, friends of mine in West Germany gave me introductions to families they knew, mostly non-Communist, and they received us warmly into their homes and talked frankly, but urged us not to make contact via their office. People known to have too many Western contacts may still face difficulties with their children's higher education, or be denied the chance to travel abroad themselves on official delegations.

THE MAJOR restriction on this kind of contact is that anyone in any kind of official position is formally classified as a *Geheimnisträger* (bearer of secrets) and is forbidden to have dealings with the West, or he may lose his job. This applies even to teachers, municipal employees, and the junior staff of scientific institutes. One senior West German journalist in Hamburg, originally from East Berlin, told me that his aged mother is still living there and so is his brother, an executive in a State firm:

> "He of course is a *Geheimnisträger* and mustn't see me. In fact, his promotion has been blocked because of my very existence. When I go to stay with my mother, he parks his car two blocks away and meets me there. He is sure the secret police are tailing him, but they don't seem to mind so long as he's discreet. . . . That's the GDR for you. . . ."

Restrictions on talking to foreigners have even been tightened up in recent years, under a 1979 law that makes it illegal for anyone to pass information "judged to be damaging to the Socialist state". This hardly affects conversations in private, so long as they are not overheard, but it does greatly limit the scope of Western journalists and television teams. And the reason for the new law is simple. Until 1979, West German TV and radio reports would regularly do *vox pop* interviews in the streets, and they found that a great many people were prepared to take the risk of talking freely and critically. So GDR screens tuned to the West were nightly full of citizens airing their grievances and thus making nonsense of the official line. Moreover, people could see that their complaints were widely shared across the country. It is hardly surprising that the régime eventually felt obliged to crack down on this. So life is now harder not only for visiting journalists but for the permanent correspondents.

Another well-known hazard of travel in the GDR—the border controls at entry and departure—has become much less burdensome than it used to be. The first time you enter the country at one of the *Autobahn* checkpoints, it all looks pretty sinister—the guards with their sub-machine-guns; the successive barriers to be negotiated; the notices not to exceed 20 kph; the long queues of cars; the steely-faced *Beamte* scrutinising every passport. But after a second or third visit it begins to seem quite normal. The officials today have orders to be courteous and will sometimes even smile; just occasionally they will inexplicably search through your wallet, or scour the car from boot to bonnet, or ask probing questions about your trip and whom you plan to see—but this has become rare. Except at peak holiday times, the border crossing seldom takes more than 30 minutes (in the 1970s, it was often several hours), and the list of forbidden imports, headed by West German books and magazines, has become more predictable. There can still, however, be bureaucratic traps for visas, as my wife and I discovered on more than one occasion. Since my passport was British and hers West German, we faced different sets of rules. When we wanted to extend our visas by one night, our East Berlin hotel fixed this for me on the spot, but she was told at 10.30 p.m. that she would have to leave for West Berlin by midnight and then re-enter. So I drove her to the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof and then waited for what seemed like a Kafkaesque eternity, suddenly loathing this police state with all my guts, while she went through the ludicrous process of checking out through one set of controls, walking across to the incoming platform, and then checking in through the other set where she managed to explain the situation, show her hotel booking, and get a new visa. This she achieved just in time, before midnight struck, when the frontier closed for the night.

One last frustration concerns hotels. Except for the militarised zones, the visitor nowadays can travel where he likes in the GDR: but he will not get a visa unless he has booked all hotel accommodation in advance or given other written proof of where he intends to stay. Touring impromptu is impossible. Almost all the old country inns, or other small hotels of character, that are so easy to find and delightful to use in West Germany, have long since disappeared from the GDR: after the War the State turned them into private dwellings, to ease the housing shortage. In order to cope with the new tourist trade, it has built a number of large modern luxury palaces; and it is in these, or in middle-rank business hotels, that visitors must stay. They are relatively cheap by Western standards and quite well run, but not exactly full of charm. And, as most of the grander ones take only hard currency, they become ghettos for Western tourists which GDR citizens cannot use.

The prime reason for this *apartheid* may be economic: but it does also serve to cut down on unwanted social contacts. So the sight of these bustling hotel foyers, full of Western visitors and their East German guides, vividly underlines the reality

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of there being not only two Germanies but two species of German. I found these spacious and comfortable compounds rather depressing. It was a little like staying at a Hilton in some miserable African country—yet here one was among fellow Europeans.

TRAVEL POSSIBILITIES in the other direction, from East to West, were not improved at all for the average citizen under the 1971-72 agreements; and today people yearn more keenly for this freedom of movement than for any other of the rights denied them. The original 1949 Constitution guaranteed the right to leave the GDR, but this was removed from the 1968 Constitution, still in force today, and it is now graciously allowed only to certain categories. Of these the most important is retired people (women over 60, men over 65), who are allowed to leave for up to 60 days a year—and over 1.5 million such visits are made annually. So the GDR, as the joke goes, is the only country in the world where you look forward to growing old.

Few of these travellers elect to remain in the West: but, if they do, the régime hardly cares, for it is thus spared paying their pension and anyway they have ceased to be productively useful. Every night at the Friedrichstrasse you can see them returning by the late trains from their daily trips, clutching their bags full of prized goodies given by friends and relatives in West Berlin.

Those under 60 or 65 can get permission to visit close relatives in the West for weddings, funerals, special anniversaries, and some other "urgent family reasons" including death-bed sickness. Recently the régime, for reasons of its own, has become much more liberal in allowing such trips: in 1982 only about 40,000 were made each year, but by 1986 the annual figure had risen to 300,000 or more. However, husband and wife cannot both go at the same time, and single men under 26 are generally barred, while other applications too are often arbitrarily refused.

The other category allowed out is the trusted ones who go on official delegations—senior Party members, privileged businessmen and unionists, some youth groups, as well as sports teams and artists, singers, and other star performers who earn the GDR prestige and hard currency. They are generally screened for their reliability.

Party leaders' wives can go too—for shopping. In West Berlin, you sometimes see chauffeur-driven Volga limousines with GDR number-plates parked near the famous *Kaufhaus des Westens* (*KaDeWe* for short), the largest department store on the Continent. Here the lucky ladies make a bee-line for the gigantic and super-opulent food section, which rivals Harrods'. Ordinary GDR pensioners visit it too—and the sight of its long counters piled high with scores of varieties of cheeses, *Wurst*, succulent cuts of meat, *foie gras*, *Torte*, tropical fruits and rare vegetables, must cause acute culture-shock to any East German making a first trip to the West.

Those debarred from such delights can at least go on holiday to other Soviet bloc countries—to the Black Sea, or to Hungary or Czechoslovakia (Poland has been virtually out of bounds since the rise of *Solidarity*). In these countries they can meet West Germans on holiday, and will sometimes make friends that way; but more often they feel humiliated at being patronised by the rich Westerners or badly served by waiters who prefer clients who tip in Deutschmarks. And they find that even in the East there is no free movement: only Czechoslovakia can be visited without a visa, while between all these brotherly socialist paradises there are strict border formalities. Most people take their annual holiday within the confines of their own little country and, while some may share a rural *dacha* with friends or relatives, the majority go to a hotel, camp or hostel organised by their factory, on the Baltic or in the Harz or Saxon hills. As the facilities are limited, often they have no choice but must go where they are sent.

Poles, Hungarians and even Czechs are all much freer than East Germans to visit the West. If the GDR is here so repressive, the reasons are obvious. This is the only Soviet-bloc-country with a sister nation along its Western border, sharing the same language, culture and history, and where some 30% of GDR citizens still have relatives. In the eyes of the GDR rulers, West Germany exploits this kinship to exert "intolerable pressures". For domestic political reasons as well as for sincerely-felt moral ones, successive governments in Bonn have not only refused to recognise the legitimacy of the East's régime but have claimed themselves to be the only rightful rulers of all Germany—to the extent that any GDR citizen will automatically be treated as a West German citizen if he or she wishes. Any GDR émigré arriving in the Federal Republic can obtain a passport within minutes of entering a police station, and will straight away be granted the full rights and duties of citizenship, including social security benefits and the obligation of military service for young men. What is more, there are absolutely no border controls on the Western side—you just drive straight through.

The GDR leaders remain furious at this "suborning" by a richer power. And they seem to believe seriously that if the travel ban were lifted it would lead to a new mass exodus. But would this be so, today? It cannot be proved either way: but it is worth noting that only 2% of pensioners visiting the West decided to stay there. Western journalists and others who talk to large numbers of GDR citizens get the impression that only about one in ten would leave permanently for the West if they could. Many have been influenced by the Western TV programmes about high unemployment. In this smallish country with few touristic splendours of its own, most people simply want to go to take a look at, say, Paris or the Alps and then come back, in the normal way. But the régime doubts this. It appears to believe that this yearning for travel will wane as the family ties with the West loosen, so that all it needs do is wait. This is certainly mistaken. It is not because he has an aunt in Mannheim that a young East German wants to visit the West, but because he wants to see for himself the fabulous places that appear on his TV screen.

MEANWHILE, EVERYONE MOANS and complains, including a great many *SED* loyalists. "The leaders should trust the people more", I was told by one senior novelist, a Party member. "The claustrophobia leads

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to a general national psychosis, affecting even workers and others who would never seek to travel abroad. But, because they can't they resent it. . . ." And with a new generation now grown up that never knew the pre-Wall days, so the GDR's population has been growing steadily more isolated and provincial, more cut off from direct experience of the world outside. Even educated people will often seem oddly naïve, unable to make comparisons; and whenever I met someone who was fortunate enough to have travelled to the West, his sophistication and liveliness of mind came usually as a striking contrast. The others are merely wistful. I dined with one academic who said that his requests to attend conferences in the West had always been turned down because he had a sister in Frankfurt. He and his wife gazed down with me at the East Berlin lights below our rooftop restaurant, and he asked sadly, "Does Frankfurt look like that, or brighter?"

"Not much brighter", I said tactfully. But, when later I happened to mention that I had been in Kreuzberg (in West Berlin) the day before, I felt that I had made a gaffe. It was two kilometres from where we were sitting, but might have been on another planet.

Some people take the desperate step of trying to escape physically across the border; but they are few nowadays, for the risk of failure and death is high. In 1970 about 1,000 succeeded, but by 1985 the number was down to 160, only six of whom got away over the Berlin Wall. Estimates of the failures vary, but it is believed that since 1961 some 70 people have been shot dead while trying to climb the Wall, and some 3,000 others have been arrested in Berlin while preparing to escape. People found moving towards the "forbidden zone" along the West German border are generally seized by the police and imprisoned. Escapes across this border have been made by swimming the Elbe, by hiding in barges, by boat on the Baltic, and in many other ways; most spectacularly, in 1979 two families, each with two children, made their getaway by travelling 25 miles in a home-made hot-air balloon. In Berlin, among the various escape routes through the Wall, one favoured method has been to seek the help of friendly diplomats and hide in their cars, which are not supposed to be searched. In 1979, the East German chauffeur of the US Ambassador to the GDR took his family out one at a time in this way.

MUCH LESS HAZARDOUS than a bolt across the border is the practice of escaping via a third country, when one is either on holiday or on some visiting delegation. Some 3,000 a year successfully try this method. In Cologne I met a couple in their early forties, both doctors, who had gone on holiday to Hungary with their young son. There they found a West German lorry-driver prepared to stow them away with his goods, and he took them into Yugoslavia, where the lorry was searched and they were arrested. Such incidents occur very often, and the Yugoslav authorities are basically helpful; that is, they will send the refugees on to West Germany rather than back home to face imprisonment.

But it can take time. The family I met spent three weeks in separate cells while their case was being sorted out, and then they were allowed to travel to Cologne where they had friends and eventually found suitable jobs. They had left the GDR, they said:

> "because as non-*SED* members and known churchgoers our careers in our hospitals were blocked and so was our son's education. The older post-War generation of doctors were people with ideals and integrity, and we respected them. But the younger ones now coming to the top, of our own age, are more opportunistic and politicised, and there is now a sharper polarisation between those who back the régime and those who do not. As junior doctors we could escape this: but, if we wanted more senior hospital jobs, we had to join the Party and make the right noises—and this we just could not stomach. So we decided to leave. . . ."

On another occasion, in Karlsruhe, I heard an extraordinary saga from a young teacher:

> "As a schoolboy in Leipzig I was already very critical of the system. I asked awkward questions in class, I even proclaimed my sympathy for Dubček, and so I fell into disgrace. I wasn't allowed to be an engineer as I'd wanted, and instead they sent me to a teacher training college where they hoped they could stamp the nonsense out of me. By now I was toying with the idea of escaping to the West. So I kept quiet politically for a couple of years—and they thought they *had* converted me!
>
> I was musical, so I joined a folk-song group as a guitarist, for I knew that in this way I might be able to travel abroad one day. My chance came when the group was sent to sing political songs at a big Left-wing rally in Milan. Of the ten of us, two were security police and they wouldn't let us out of their sight for an instant. But when we went shopping I dodged them by going to the loo, and then crawled through the back window and made my way to the West German consulate which paid for me to join my sister in Karlsruhe. Finally I got a job here as a teacher, for I had my study diplomas hidden in my guitar.
>
> The GDR authorities were furious, of course. They cross-questioned my father and at first tried to get him to pay back the 21,000 Marks they'd invested in my education: but, as my father wasn't responsible, they had to drop this ploy. Instead, they removed him from his job as manager of a factory and set him to be its night-watchman. It was humiliating. But he doesn't blame me. He thinks I did right and he admires my courage. . . ."

In 1984-85 there was a sudden vogue for another attempted means of exit via third countries: sit-ins at West German embassies. The demonstrators hoped that, by entering these premises and refusing to budge, they could cajole the Federal Government into granting them asylum and thus citizenship. It is in fact against international law for embassies to facilitate this kind of venture. But, as under West German law these refugees were its own citizens, Bonn felt obliged to do something to help them, even at the risk of upsetting its newly improved relations with Honecker.

To the acute embarrassment of both sides, one of the first

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East Germans to try it on was none other than the niece of Willi Stoph, the GDR Prime Minister; in February 1984 she took refuge with her husband and two children in the West German embassy in Prague. After frantic behind-the-scenes negotiations, the family finally went back to East Berlin with a promise that they would be allowed exit visas; this was honoured, and soon afterwards they left for Hamburg.

This success then encouraged a flood of other attempts. During the next year over 200 East Germans "occupied" Bonn's embassies in Prague, Warsaw, Budapest and Bucharest, and other groups did likewise at the American Embassy and the West German Mission in East Berlin. Again there was much secret bargaining, and finally most of the asylum-seekers went back home with promises of visas for the West, granted by the GDR in return for large credits from Bonn—a typical example of the familiar German/German barter in human freedom against hard currency. However, after a spectacular three-month squat by over 150 East Germans in the embassy in Prague in the autumn of 1984, the Federal Government warned the GDR population via radio and television that it would no longer tolerate these sit-ins. And since then they have ceased. Kohl was under some domestic Right-wing pressure to help the protesters. But at the same time, on top of the diplomatic considerations, he realised that to condone illegal sit-ins of this kind would simply harm his chances of persuading Honecker to increase the flow of legal immigrants.

TODAY, AUTHORISED EMIGRATION by those who simply apply for an exit visa and finally get one is much the commonest form of departure: five to ten times more people leave the GDR this way than by escaping illegally. The régime still refuses to release those whom it considers especially valuable, such as scientists or key technicians. But, as we have seen in the case of certain writers, it has become a little readier to say goodbye to restive critics and other malcontents whose presence disturbs morale. It does not want to encourage too great a flood of visa applications, so it harasses and even penalises those who dare to show ingratitude to the Socialist fatherland by asking to leave it. In many cases, the applicant will rapidly lose his job and possibly also be restricted to one part of the country, while his children will be discriminated against at school. Especially this happens if another member of the family has already left illegally for the West. Applicants may have to wait around for years in this state of disgrace, without knowing whether their visas will ever be granted: so, if you want to leave the GDR, you have to be pretty determined about it.

Even so, by 1985 the lists of those who had formally lodged demands were believed to total some 500,000. In a normal year, about 10,000 to 12,000 are let out: so, if the visas were granted in turn, the average delay could be nearly 50 years, and it would be more sensible to wait to become a pensioner and then go freely! But the system is more capricious than this. Many applications are simply shelved indefinitely, with no reasons given and no means of finding out what the prospects are; others may get a favourable response within a year or two.

During the first four months of 1984 the gates were suddenly opened more widely: some 22,000 people left in that period, leading to a total for the year of nearly 35,000. There was much speculation as to the reasons. Had Honecker suddenly been smitten with the spirit of generosity? Probably not, for the flow later returned to not much above its normal level. Was he trying to get rid of more trouble-makers than usual? Unlikely.

Soon, however, the most probable explanation emerged. The GDR in 1983 had successfully negotiated a one-billion-DM bank credit from the Kohl Government, and the unwritten *quid pro quo* was this "special delivery" of emigrants. It was the largest of a number of secret deals of this kind in recent years, where the GDR trades these humanitarian concessions for the hard currency loans that it so badly needs. Bonn will never admit publicly to these transactions, but the news has leaked out, and the average "ransom" is believed to be around 10,000 DM per head, with the tacit understanding that the GDR will continue to release at least 12,000 a year so long as the economic aid is kept up. This puts the Bonn Government in something of a dilemma. It feels obliged to try to help oppressed Germans and is under some public pressure to do so; on the other hand, it is under pressure from the unions not to be *too* generous, for this would simply add to unemployment. In today's climate, by no means all the emigrants find it easy to get jobs.

When they first arrive in West Germany, they are usually delighted. They are happy to be free, and amazed at a society where the shops are so full and the buildings so well cared for, and where people can say what they like without fear. Many of them, the more resourceful of those with good qualifications or friends or relatives to help them, succeed in adapting fairly easily.

BUT OTHERS do not. Either they fail to find a job, or in other ways they steadily become disillusioned. Used to being cocooned, spoon-fed, and herded together, they just cannot cope with having to fend for themselves, with the competitiveness and the faster pace of life, with the difficulty in making friends and the sheer indifference of other people. A woman from Leipzig who had settled in Munich said to me:

> "Here, if you paint yourself red, blue or green all over, no one will care or even notice. In the GDR, you must first think carefully how red, blue or green would be interpreted."

And in Hamburg an aristocratic lady running a charitable office for émigrés commented:

> "Some of them have been spoilt by Western TV and they come with false ideas of our society. They expect to be supplied with a high standard of living, a big flat and a regular job, and they have no idea how to freelance or fight for themselves to obtain these things. So they end up disappointed and maybe want to go back."

One common cause of disillusion is that they find they are not always greeted with open arms by their fellow-Germans,

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who in this time of longer dole queues have come to treat the newcomers warily—if not with the same resentful hostility that they reserve for Turks. An Allensbach poll in 1984 found 48% of West Germans saying, "They are also Germans and we should welcome them." But as many as 38% thought that they would add to the country's difficulties.

So the West is no paradise. Of course, some of the misfits are the kind of people who would be unhappy anywhere. A few turn to drugs or petty crime, especially in West Berlin. And each year about 1,500 go back to the GDR. They are taking some risk in so doing, for they are likely to be put in some menial job and may face other penalties too. Far from welcoming the prodigals, or exploiting their return as a propaganda victory, the régime prefers to punish them for their betrayal, so as to discourage others from applying to leave.

If the GDR rulers are today resigned to a certain exodus of their citizens, at least they strike as hard a bargain over it as possible—and this is true especially of the notorious traffic in political prisoners, whose freedom is bought individually for hard cash, as with slaves in ancient days.

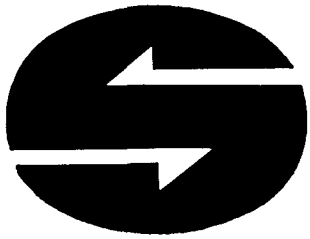
It was in 1963 that the GDR first suggested to the Federal Government that it was prepared to sell its convicts. Bonn accepted, and ever since then it has pursued this trade that it discreetly calls its "special humanitarian activities". According to Amnesty International, there are about 5,000 "political prisoners" in the GDR, of whom some 70% have been arrested while trying to escape. Since 1963 they have been released to West Germany at the rate of about 1,000 a year, sometimes more. Bonn is believed to have paid well over three billion DM for them.

The price for each release is fixed individually, and the money has to be paid over two weeks in advance into an East German account in Frankfurt. Then the ransomed prisoners come out in coachloads, most of them from a prison at Karl-Marxstadt in Saxony, and are taken to a camp at Giessen in Hessen, to be debriefed. Though the fees are kept secret, it is believed that an artisan will cost about 30,000 DM, a junior teacher 50,000 DM, and a doctor or professor 200,000 or more, while 2.5 million DM is said to have been demanded for one senior academic. So keen is the régime on securing these funds that (as Bonn officials will suggest privately) it seems to be ensuring that its prisons are kept well stocked; at least, the number of political prisoners has been rising recently.

On the GDR side, the barter is conducted by the infamous Wolfgang Vogel, an urbane and cosmopolitan private lawyer in East Berlin who comes and goes through the Wall as he pleases and whose big Mercedes can sometimes be seen parked outside the Federal Government office in West Berlin. It is he who has also negotiated many of the high-level Soviet-American "spy swaps", beginning with the release in 1962 of the *U-2* pilot Francis Gary Powers. When asked to justify the selling of prisoners, he will advance the official GDR view that the money is needed, firstly to compensate the State for the "damage" done to socialism by their political actions; and secondly (the excuse given for the trade in ordinary emigrants too) to repay the money invested in their education.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government too has sometimes come in for criticism in the West for taking part in this traffic. Is it morally justified, some people ask, in lending itself as an accomplice to the GDR's breach of human rights? And should it be encouraging the export of the very people whose critical pressure might help to liberate the GDR if they stayed? There may be some validity in these arguments. But almost any Bonn politician will reply—correctly, in my view—that the cause of helping victimised fellow-Germans must come first.

Inter-German Relations



The growth of economic links between the two Germanies is illustrated by the fact that the level of trade between them more than doubled between 1974 and 1985, to reach a total of 16.5 billion DM a year. West Germany supplies large quantities of half-finished goods and production materials, and through a special credit system the GDR is able to avoid having to pay for these in hard currency. In turn it sells its neighbour a wide range of consumer goods such as clothing, shoes, toys, porcelain and electric motors. What is more, it gains special free access to EEC markets—for since Bonn refuses to treat the border as a true frontier, it has persuaded its eleven EEC partners to affix a protocol to the Treaty of Rome whereby its imports from the GDR escape the normal Common Market tariffs.

East Germany has also begun to seek industrial investment and expertise from the West, and has found several major firms ready to cooperate, including Siemens and Krupp. Above all, Volkswagen in 1984 signed a 600 million DM contract for setting up a plant at Karl-Marxstadt where it will manufacture for the GDR's Wartburg and Trabant cars the same engines that it uses in its Golfs and Polos. As the GDRs own little two-cylinder engines have hitherto been noisy, pollutant, and generally inefficient, this should make a nice change. The Soviet Union exerted pressure to prevent the deal, for it disliked the idea of the GDR becoming too dependent on West German technology. But this was one of those infrequent occasions where Honecker successfully defied Moscow.

Inter-German commerce represents only about 1.8% of West Germany's overall foreign trade, but 9% of that of the GDR, making the Federal Republic its most important trading partner after the Soviet Union.

There is a fundamental gulf between the two sides' motives in seeking rapprochement, and this may well prevent the links from getting much closer. As one official in Bonn put it to me succinctly:

"Each side propagates its separate fictions—the one, that

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> Germany is really still a single country; the other, that it is two distinct sovereign states, unconnected save that they happen to be neighbours. The GDR's central aim in rapprochement is to have this status quo recognised and confirmed; the Federal Republic's aim is to encourage a more fluid situation that might lead eventually, if not to reunification, at least to a kind of federalism based on a more liberal régime in the GDR. At heart, the two paths are utterly irreconcilable. . . ."

The GDR's strategy is to manoeuvre Bonn into a *de facto* diplomatic recognition through this inter-governmental dealing, and to make it be seen publicly to be treating it as an equal partner. The strategy seems to have made some progress. On the other side, the Federal Republic's attitude is highly equivocal, a kind of double act. For, whereas it still holds to the moral principle that "The East Germans are part of us" (as one official put it to me bluntly), it is also pragmatic enough to realise that the best way of reducing tensions, strengthening ties, and generally helping the people of the GDR is by negotiating tactfully with the hated non-State across the border, buttering it up, and wheedling concessions out of it. "A more self-confident East German Government, stronger both politically and economically, is in our interests", said the Bonn official I have just quoted, "for it will feel more secure and be readier to give its citizens more liberty."

This was roughly the Brandt and Schmidt approach, and it has been followed by Kohl, who in his own way has made quite a contribution to *Ostpolitik*. And yet there are plenty of Right-wingers who still think it is immoral even to parley in a friendly way with a totalitarian régime that has been imposed on Germans against their will, without free elections, by the force of Soviet arms. The majority of the West German people, while not going as far as this, none the less still believe that it would be wrong to extend full recognition to a government of this kind. It is indeed worth noting that all Allensbach polls of recent years have consistently shown between 70% and 76% of the sample agreeing that the following clause should be retained in the Constitution:

> "The entire German people are called upon to achieve in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany."

BOTH SIDES PLAY absurd verbal games with each other in the battle over protocol and status. While the GDR uses its Foreign Ministry for dealing with West Germany, the latter conducts affairs through its special *Bundesministerium für Innerdeutsche Beziehungen*, i.e. the Ministry for "internal" (*not* "inter") German relations—and this nuance maddens East Berlin. Maps and atlases printed in West Germany, whether for schools or for tourists, show the country as one, with the inter-German border hardly visible. Weather reports on TV give the same details about rain or shine in Dresden as in Stuttgart; and signposts in Hessen will give the distances to Eisenach or Leipzig.

The GDR hits back in its own way. Its maps of East Berlin show the Western sector as a blank space, while bedside telephone directories in its smart hotels will tell you how to dial Oslo or Belgrade but not Frankfurt or Hamburg. West Germany charges domestic rates for letters and telephone calls to the GDR, while the other way the rates are international ones. And so on.

The sharpest wrangle is over Berlin: the Allies, with legal right on their side, still refuse to recognise East Berlin as the capital of the GDR, so the GDR retorts by downgrading West Berlin as much as it can. On the transit *Autobahnen* from the West, large signs announce the distance to "BERLIN, HAUPTSTADT DER DDR", with just a small side-mention of "WESTBERLIN" (all one word), It would all seem terribly childish, were it not so terribly significant.

In recent years, the GDR has been making even more of the running than Bonn in trying to secure closer links between the separate States. In 1983 and again in 1984 Honecker laid plans with the Kohl government for paying his first ever official visit. He was born in the Saar, and no doubt he was filled with an old man's nostalgic desire to see again the places of his childhood. More to the point, he was also keen to win the diplomatic victory of being greeted as a State guest in Bonn. It was partly over this protocol issue that both projected visits were cancelled, for neither side could agree just exactly how Honecker should be received.

However, it was mainly under pressure from Moscow that the second and more determined of the two attempts was abandoned, in the autumn of 1984. It happened soon after Bonn had agreed to the stationing of US Cruise and *Pershing II* missiles in West Germany. In this tenser East-West climate the Russians did not want inter-German relations to grow chummier. Honecker fought to preserve his plans, but failed; for on this kind of basic strategic issue Moscow always has the last word. Observers pointed to the irony of the fact that originally, in 1971, it was the Soviet Union that had pushed a reluctant GDR into *détente* with its neighbour, and had ousted Ulbricht in favour of Honecker for that purpose; now the boot was on the other foot. However, despite this particular setback in 1984, inter-German rapprochement in recent years has generally managed to survive quite well the various ups-and-downs of Soviet-American tensions.

The Allensbach Institute backs up this view with a number of interesting opinion surveys conducted over the years. In 1981, the number of people saying they would like reunification was still as high as 62%, but the proportion thinking it might one day be possible was down to 13%, as against 28% in 1966. Asked, "*What do you think is the most important problem facing West Germany today?*", in 1959 far more people (45%) quoted reunification than any other topic, with East-West *détente* scoring 16% and economic questions 15%. By 1980 those figures had changed dramatically: the economy came first with 86%, peace and *détente* second with 33%, while *less than 1%* cited reunification.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN within the GDR? The rulers will continue their policy of trying to build up a real national identity, with the dual aim of impressing

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world opinion and of creating a focus of loyalty for their own people. They utilise sporting achievements to this end, also culture and history. The expensive restoration of historic buildings, including the estimated 300 million marks spent on the Semper Opera in Dresden, has in part the purpose of encouraging East Germans to feel proud of belonging to a nation with such a heritage. In schools and universities, Goethe and Schiller, Bach, Schumann, and other great writers and composers are shown to be part of that heritage too—and legitimately so, for East German towns such as Leipzig and Weimar lie in the heartland of classic German culture quite as much as any city in West Germany.

German history is enlisted in the same cause. For some years now, Party leaders and ideologists have been at pains to stress that the GDR emanates from the age-old peasant and worker traditions of the German nation, whereas the Federal Republic represents merely its capitalist and imperialist elements. Honecker has said that the GDR is "the work of many past generations", with its roots in the peasant revolts of the Middle Ages, the democratic uprisings of 1848, and, of course, the teachings of Marx and Engels.

Today, more surprisingly, the Party has even been rehabilitating aspects of the old Prussian past that have no such Leftist credentials. In the heart of the old Prussian capital, the statue of Frederick the Great has been restored to its old place on the Unter den Linden, after having been removed by Ulbricht and hidden for 30 years in a park in Potsdam. The 19th-century military reformer Scharnhorst has been the subject of an appreciative TV series; and Luther too is back in favour. Most curiously, whereas after 1945 Frederick the Great and Bismarck were both officially denounced as "forerunners of Hitler" and then for many years treated as taboo subjects, in 1985 the GDR published a detailed and intelligent biography of the Iron Chancellor, written by a Marxist historian, Professor Ernst Engelberg. He chose as his theme a remark of Lenin's: "Bismarck in his Junker way played a progressive historical role", and went on to stress his reformist work in, for example, founding Germany's social welfare services. For many a loyal history teacher in schools, the turnabouts were bewildering.

The GDR leaders both old and new see the strengthening of the economy as the most crucial element in their strategy. One disturbing problem is that East Germany has not had either the hard currency or the foresight to invest adequately in the new technologies, and it now risks losing its world markets to those who have; for example, it has been successful hitherto in exporting its washing-machines, but is now beginning to lose ground in face of the more sophisticated electronic equipment made in capitalist countries. But to make the transfer to a high-technology-orientated industry is not simply a matter of money, planning, and technical expertise: it requires also a change in attitudes. And here, as one expert observer suggested to me:

> "The trouble with the GDR is that the structure of management is just not geared to the kind of risk-taking and incentive motivation that these new innovative industries need, in the East as in the West. The top jobs in firms and economic departments are held down by mediocre *apparatchiks* who fear that they would be shown up as inadequate, and maybe replaced, if the system were changed to one of greater competition and risk. So they favour the status quo—and they are numerous and influential enough to be able to ensure that it is preserved. It is a leaden situation. . . ."

Let me end by quoting an anonymous "renowned novelist" (Stefan Heym, I strongly suspect) who recently told a BBC correspondent:

> "The State is out on a limb. It was supposed to offer a spiritual ideal, and it hasn't. I believe socialism is a much better idea than capitalism, but it's never had a chance to prove it here. We're stifled by bureaucracy and the lack of freedom to criticise. If this were a real socialist state, we'd have the whole of Germany by now. But it's not, and the Wall is there to prove it."

So what is to be our ultimate verdict on this socialist society? First, that it is a great deal less harsh than it could be—or than it once was. Despite the Wall and all that, life has in many ways become more livable in the GDR over the past twenty years; it remains a police state, but except for a tiny minority of dissenters it is not a savage or unjust one. Most inhabitants accept the situation and even see some virtues in Socialism. But they would like a *better* Socialism—and many of them have given up hope that they will ever see it.

My own basic feeling is that, while the régime could certainly be much worse than it is, it has rather few constructive qualities of its own from which Western societies could learn. It may have removed unemployment and the darker side of poverty, but at some cost to individual liberty. It vaunts its welfare services, which indeed are good; but those of the capitalist West are better. Above all, as its critics constantly point out, socialism in the GDR has lost most of its earlier genuine idealism and become a grey, regimented affair, concerned primarily with preserving its own power.

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A. S. Byatt

Precipice-encurled

What's this then, which proves good yet seems untrue?
Is fiction, which makes fact alive, fact too?
The somehow may be thishow.
Robert Browning, THE RING AND THE BOOK

THE WOMAN sits in the window. Beneath her is the stink of the canal and on the skyline is a steel-grey sheet of cloud and an unswallowed setting sun. She watches the long lines of dark green seaweed moving on the thick surface of the water, and the strong sweeping gulls, fugitives from storms in the Adriatic. She is a plump woman in a tea-gown. She wears a pretty lace cap and pearls. These things are known, are highly probable. She has fine features fleshed—a compressed, drooping little mouth, a sharp nose, sad eyes, an indefinable air of disappointment, a double chin. This we can read from portraits, more than one, tallying, still in existence. She has spent the afternoon in bed; her health is poor, but she rallies for parties, for outings, for occasions. There she sits, or might be supposed to sit, any autumn day on any of several years at the end of the last century. She commands the devoted services of three gondoliers, a handyman, a cook, a maid and a kitchen-maid. Also an accountant-houskeeper. She has a daughter, young and marriageable, and a husband, mysteriously ill in Paris, from whom she is estranged but not divorced. Her daughter is out on a party of pleasure, perhaps, and has been adjured to take her new umbrella, the one with the prettily carved crickets and butterflies on its handle. She has an eye for the execution of delicate objects: it has been said of her that she would exchange a Tintoretto for a cabinet of tiny gilded glasses. She has an eye for fashion: in this year where clothes are festooned with dead humming-birds and more startling creatures, mice, moths, beetles and lizards, she will give a dance where everyone must wear flights of birds pasted on ribbons—"awfully chic"—or streamers of butterflies. The room in which she sits is full of mother-of-pearl cabinets full of intricate little artefacts. She is the author of an unpublished and authoritative history of Venetian naval architecture. Also of some completely undistinguished poems. She is the central character in no story, but peripheral in many, where she may appear reduced to two or three bold identifying marks. She has a passion for pug dogs and for miniature Chinese spaniels: at her feet, on this gloomy day, lie, shall we say, Contenta, Trolley, Yahabibi and Thisbe, snoring a little as such dogs do, replete. She also has a passion for peppermint creams; do the dogs enjoy these too, or are they disciplined? One account of her gives three characteristics only: plump, pug dogs, peppermint creams.

Henry James, it is said, had the idea of making her the central character of a merely projected novel—did he mean to tackle the mysteriously absent husband, make of him one of those electric Jamesian force-fields of unspecified signficance? He did, it is also said, write her into *The Aspern Papers*, in a purely subordinate and structural role, the type of the well-to-do American woman friend of the narrator, an authorial device, what James called a *ficelle*, economically connecting us, the readers, to the necessary people and the developing drama. She lent the narrator her gondola. She was a generous woman. She is an enthusiast: she collects locks of hair, snipped from great poetic temples, which she enshrines in lockets of onyx. She is waiting for Robert Browning. She has done and will do this in many years. She has supervised and will supervise the excellent provision of sheets and bathroom facilities for his Venetian visits. She chides him for not recognising that servants know their place and are happy in it. She sends him quires of hand-made Venetian paper which he distributes to artists and poets of his acquaintance. She selects brass salvers for him. She records his considered and unconsidered responses to scenery and atmosphere. She looks at the gulls with interest he has instilled. "I do not know why I never see in descriptions of Venice any mention of the sea-gulls; to me they are even more interesting than the doves of St Mark." He said that, and she recorded it. She recorded that occasionally he would allow her daughter to give him a cup of tea "to our great delight". "As a rule, he abstained from what he considered a somewhat unhygienic beverage if taken before dinner."

II

DEAR DEAD WOMAN, the scholar thinks, peering into the traces on the hooded green plane of the microfilm reader, or turning over browned packets of polite notes of gratitude, acceptance, anticipation, preserved perhaps in one of those fine boxes of which in her lifetime she had so many, containing delicate cigarettes on inlaid pearly octagon-

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al tables, or precious fragments of verses copied out for autograph books. He has gleaned her words from Kansas and Cambridge, Florence, Venice and Oxford, he has read her essay on lace and her tributes to the condescension of genius, he has heard the flitting of young skirts at long-vanished festivities. He has stood, more or less, on the spot where she stood with the poet in Asolo in 1889, looking back to Browning's first contemplation of the place in 1838, looking back to the internecine passions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, listening to the chirrup of the contumacious grasshopper. He has seen her blood colour the cheeks of her noble Italian granddaughter who has opened to him those houses where the poet dined, recited, conversed, teased, reminisced. He likes her, partly because he now knows her, has pieced her together. Resuscitated, Browning might have said, did say, roundly, of his Roman murderers and biased lawyers, child-wife, wise moribund Pope and gallant priest he found or invented in his dead and lively Yellow Book.

A good scholar may permissibly invent, he may have an hypothesis, but fiction is barred. This scholar believes, plausibly, that his assiduous and fragile subject is the hidden heroine of a love-story, the inapprehensive object, at the age of fifty-four, of a dormant passion in a handsome seventy-seven-year-old poet. He records the physical vigour, the beautiful hands and fine white head of hair of his hero. He records the probable feelings of his heroine, which stop short at exalted hero-worship, the touch of talismanic mementos, not living flesh. He adduces a poem, "Inapprehensiveness", in which the poetic speaker reproves the inapprehensive stare of a companion intent on Ruskin's hypothetical observation of the waving form of certain weed-growths on a ravaged wall, who ignores "the dormant passion needing but a look/To burst into immense life".

The scholar's story combs the facts this way. They have a subtle, not too dramatic shape, life-like in that. He scrutinises the microfilm, the yellowing letters, for little bright nuggets and filaments of fact to add to his mosaic. In 1882 the poet was in the Alps, with a visit to Venice in prospect after a proposed visit to another English family in Italy. She waited for him. In terms of this story she waited in vain. An "incident" elsewhere, an "unfortunate accident" the scholar wrote, following his thread, coupled with torrential rain in Bologna, caused the poet to return to London. He was in danger of allowing the friendship to cool, the scholar writes, perhaps anxious on her behalf, perhaps on the poet's, perhaps on his own.

III

A MAN, HE ALWAYS THOUGHT, was more himself alone in a hotel room. Unless, of course, he vanished altogether without the support of others' consciousness of him, and the solidity of his taste and his history in his possessions. To be itinerant suited and sharpened him. He liked this room. It was quiet, on the second floor, the last in a long corridor, its balcony face to face with a great, bristling primeval glacier. The hotel, he wrote, sitting at the table listening to the silent snow and the fraternising tinkle of unseen cattle, was "quite perfect, with every comfort desirable, and no drawback of any kind".

The journey up had been rough—two hours carriage-drive, and then seven continued hours of clambering and crawling on mule-back. He wrote letters partly out of courtesy to his large circle of solicitous friends and admirers, but more in order to pick up the pen, to see the pothooks and spider-traces form, containing the world, the hotel, the mules, the paradise of coolness and quiet. The hotel was not absolutely perfect. "My very handwriting is affected by the lumpy ink and the skewery pen." Tomorrow he would walk. Four or five hours along the mountainside. Not bad for an old man, a hale old man. The mule-jolting had played havoc with his hips and the long muscles in his back. At my age, he thought, you listen to every small hurt as though it may be the beginning of the last and worst hurt, which will come. So the two things continued in his consciousness side by side, a solicitous attention to twinges, and the waiting to be reinvested by his private self. Which was like a cloak, a cloak of invisibility that fell into comfortable warm folds around him, or like a disturbed well, whose inky waters chopped and swayed and settled into blackly reflecting lucidity. Or like a brilliant baroque chapel at the centre of a decorous and unremarkable house.

He liked his public self well enough. He was surprised, to tell the truth, that he had one that worked so well, was so thoroughgoing, so at home in the world, so like other public selves. As a very young man, in strictly nonconformist South London, erudite and indulged within the four walls of a Camberwell bibliomaniac's home, he had supposed that this would be denied him, the dining-out, the gossip, the world. He wanted the world, because it was there, and he wanted everything. He had described his father, whom he loved, as a man of vast knowledge, reading and memory—totally ignorant of the world. (This ignorance had extended to his having had to leave England perpetually, as an aged widower, on account of a breach of promise action brought, with cause, against him.) His father had with consummate idealism freed him for art. My father wished me to do what I liked, he had explained, adding: I should not so bring up a son.

French novelists, he claimed, were ignorant of the habits of the English upper classes, who kept themselves to themselves. He had seen and noted them. "I seem to know a good many—for some reason or other. Perhaps because I never had any occupation." Nevertheless, he desired his son to have an occupation, and the boy, amiable and feckless, brooded over by

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his own irreducible large shadow, showed little sign of vocation or application. He amused himself as a matter of course in the world in which the father dined out and visited, so assiduously, with a perpetually renewed surprise at his own facility.

He was aware that Elizabeth would have wished it otherwise. Elizabeth had been a great poet, a captive princess liberated and turned wife, a moral force, silly over some things, such as her growing boy's long curls and the flimsy promises and fake visions of the séance. She too had not known this world that was so important. *One* such intimate knowledge as I have had with many a person would have taught her, he confided once, unguarded, had she been inclined to learn. Though I doubt if she would have dirtied her hands for any scientific purpose. His public self had a scientific purpose, and if his hands were dirty, he could wash them clean in a minute before he saw her, as he trusted to do. He had his reasonable doubts about this event, too, though he wrote bravely of it, the step from this world to that other world, the fog in the throat, the mist in the face, the snows, the blasts, the pain and then the peace out of pain and the loving arms. It was not a time of certainties, however he might assert them from time to time. It was a time of doubt, doubt was a man's business. But it was also hard to imagine all this tenacious sense of self, all this complexity of knowledge and battling, force and curiosity becoming nothing. What is a man, what is a man's soul?

DESCARTES BELIEVED, he noted down, that the seat of the soul is the pineal gland. The reason for this is a pretty reason—all else in our apparatus for apprehending the world is double, viz. two ears, two eyes, etc., and two lobes of our brain, moreover. Descartes requires that somewhere in our body all our diverse, our dual impressions must be unified before reaching the soul, which is one. He had thought often of writing a poem about Descartes, dreaming in his stove of sages and blasted churches, reducing all to the tenacity of the observing thinker, *cogito ergo sum*. A man can inhabit another man's mind, or body, or senses, or history, can jerk it into a kind of life, as galvanism moves frogs: a good poet could inhabit Descartes, the bric-à-brac of stove and ill-health and wooden bowls of onion soup, perhaps, and one of those pork knuckles, and the melon offered to the philosopher by the sage in his feverish dream, all this paraphernalia spinning round the naked *cogito* as the planets spin in an orrery.

The best part of my life, he told himself, the life I have lived most intensely has been the fitting, the infiltrating, the inventing the self of another man or woman, explored and sleekly filled out, as fingers swell a glove. I have been webbed Caliban lying in the primeval ooze, I have been madman and saint, murderer and sensual prelate, inspired David and the cringing medium, Sludge, to whom I gave David's name, with what compulsion of irony or equivocation, David Sludge? The rooms in which his solitary self sat buzzed with other selves, crying for blood as the shades cried at the pit dug by Odysseus in his need to interrogate, to revive the dead.

His father's encyclopaedias were the banks of such blood-pits, bulging with paper lives and circumstances, no two the same, none insignificant. A set of views, a time-confined philosophy, a history of wounds and weaknesses, flowers, clothing, food and drink, light on Mont Blanc's horns of silver, fangs of crystal; these coalesce to make one self in one place. Then decompose. I catch them, he thought, I hold them together, I give them coherence and vitality, I. And what am I? Just such another concatenation, a language and its rhythms, a limited stock of learning, derived from my father's consumed books and a few experiments in life, my desires, my venture in dragon-slaying, my love, my loathings also, the peculiar colours of the world through my two eyes, the blind tenacity of the small, the single driving centre, soul or self.

He felt most at ease with himself, as a young man, when he could assume other selves, even in life. He had a certain sympathy with those at the edge of lying, those makers of fictive selves who spoke out like trumpets: Macpherson, creating the wild voice of the bard, Ossian, or the fraudulent dead boy, Chatterton, with his forged or invented medieval lyrics. He remembered with defensive affection his curious youthful project to be a chameleon, "a foolish plan which occupied me mightily for a time, and which had for its object the enabling me to assume and realise I know not how many different characters;—meanwhile the world was never to guess that 'Brown, Smith, Jones and Robinson', the respective authors of this poem, the other novel, such an opera, such a speech etc. etc., were no other than one and the same individual." What had prompted all that ingenious folly? The sense that the self is most lively when its movements are secret and unobserved: whan its attention is directed outwards.

What he had written down, with the scratchy pen, were one or two ideas for Descartes and his metaphorical orrery: meaningless scraps. And this writing brought to life in him a kind of joy in greed. He would procure, he would soak in, he would comb his way through the *Discourse on Method*, and the *Passions of the Soul*; he would investigate Flemish stoves. His private self was now roused from its dormant state to furious activity. He felt the white hairs lift on his neck and his breath quickened. A bounded man, he had once written, may so project his surplusage of soul in search of body, so add self to self . . . so find, so fill full, so appropriate forms. . . . In such a state everything, everything was interesting. He had tried, not wholly successfully, to describe this visitation—writing into *The Ring and the Book*, with a kind of illegitimate glee, a description of the force that

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took hold of him when he turned the medicinable leaves of the original Yellow Book. He had called it a spirit. Not his soul, not his self, something external.

A spirit laughs and leaps through every limb
And lights my eye, and lifts me by the hair
Letting me have my will again with these—
How title I the dead alive once more?

Under the domination of this spirit a man became pure curiosity, pure interest in whatever presented itself of the creation, lovely or freakish, pusillanimous, wise or vile. Those of his creatures he most loved or most approved moved with such delighted and indifferent interest through the world. There was the tragic Duchess, destroyed by the cold egotism of a Duke who could not bear her equable pleasure in everything, a sunset, a bough of cherries, a white mule, his favour at her breast. There was Karshish the Arab physician, the not-incurious in God's handiwork, who noticed lynx and blue-flowering borage and recorded the acts of the risen Lazarus. There was David, seeing the whole earth shine with significance after soothing the passionate self-doubt of Saul; there was Christopher Smart, whose mad work of genius, his Song to David, a baroque chapel in a dull house, had recorded the particularity of the world, the whale's bulk in the waste of brine, the feather-tufts of Wild Virgin's Bower, the habits of the polyanthus. There was the risen Lazarus himself, who had briefly been in the presence of God and inhabited eternity, and to whose resuscitated life he had been able to give no other characteristics than these, the lively, indifferent interest in everything, a mule with gourds, a child's death, the flowers of the field, some trifling fact at which he will gaze "rapt with stupor at its very littleness".

HE FELT FOR HIS IDEA of what was behind all this diversity, all this interest. *At the back* was an intricate and extravagantly prolific maker. Sometimes, listening to silence, alone with himself, he heard the irregular but endlessly repeated crash of waves on a pebbled shore. His body was a porcelain-fine arched shell, sculpted who knew how, containing this roar and plash. And the drag of the moon, and the elliptical course of the planets. More often, a madly ingenious inner eye magnified small motions of flesh and blood. The twinge had become a tugging and raking in what he now feared, prophetically it turned out, was his liver. Livers were used for augury; the shining liver, the smoking liver, the Babylonians thought, was the seat of the soul: his own lay athwart him and was intimately and mysteriously connected with the lumpy pothooks. And with the inner eye which might or might not be seated in that pineal gland where Descartes located the soul.

A man has no more measured the mysteries of his internal whistlings and flowings, he thought, than he has measured the foundations of the earth or of the whirlwind. It was his covert principle to give true opinions to great liars, and to that other fraudulent resuscitator of dead souls, and filler of mobile gloves, David Sludge the Medium, he had given a vision of the minutiae of intelligence which was near enough his own. "We find great things are made of little things", he had made Sludge say, "And little things go lessening till at last/Comes God behind them."

The Name comes close behind a stomach-cyst
The simplest of creations, just a sac
That's mouth, heart, legs and belly at once, yet lives
And feels and could do neither, we conclude,
If simplified still further one degree.

"But go back and back, as you please, *at* the back, as Mr Sludge is made to insist", he had written, "you find (*my* faith is as constant) creative intelligence, acting as matter but not resulting from it. Once set the balls rolling and ball may hit ball and send any number in any direction over the table; but I believe in the cue pushed by a hand." All the world speaks the Name, as the true David truly saw: even the uneasy inflamed cells of my twinges. *At* the back, is something simple, undifferentiated, indifferently intelligent, live.

My best times are those when I approximate most closely to that state.

SHE PUT HER HAND on the knob of his door, and pushed it open without knocking. It was dark, a light, smoky dark; the window-curtains were not drawn and the windows were a couple of vague, star-lighted apertures. She saw things, a rug thrown over a chair, a valise, a dim shape hunched and silver-topped, which turned out to be her brother, back towards her, at the writing-table. "Oh, if you're busy", she said, "I won't disturb you." And then, "You can't write in the dark, Robert, it is bad for your eyes." He shook himself, like a great seal coming up from the depths, and his eyes, dark spaces under craggy brows, turned unseeing in her direction. "I don't want to disturb you", she said again, patiently waiting for his return to the land of the living. "You don't", he said, "Dear Sarianna. I was only thinking about Descartes. And it must be more than time for dinner." "There is a woman here", Sarianna confided, as they walked down the corridor, past a servant carrying candles, "with an aviary on her head, who is an admirer of your poems and wishes to join the Browning society." "*Il me semble que ce genre de choses frise le ridicule*", he said, growlingly, and she smiled to herself, for she knew that when he was introduced to the formidable Mrs Miller he would be everything that was agreeable and interested.

And the next day, on the hotel terrace, he was quite charming to his corseted and bustled admirer, who

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begged him to write in her birthday book, already graced by Lord Leighton and Thomas Trollope, who was indulgent when he professed not to remember on which of two days he had been born—was it May 17th or May 9th, he never could be certain, he said, appealing to Sarianna, who could. He had found some better ink, and copied out, as he occasionally did, in microscopic handwriting "All that I know of a certain star", adding with a bluff smile, "I always end up writing the same thing; I vary only the size. I should be more inventive."

Mrs Miller protested that his eyesight must be exquisitely fine, closing the scented leather over the hand-painted wreaths of pansies that encircled the precious script. Her hat was monumental, a circle of wings; the poet admired it, and asked detailed questions about its composition, owls, hawks, jays, swallows, encircling an entire dove. He showed considerable familiarity with Paris-prints and the vagaries of *modistes*. His public self had its own version of the indiscriminate interest in everything which was the virtue of the last Duchess, Karshish, Lazarus and Smart. He could not know how much this trait was to irritate Henry James, who labelled it bourgeois, whose fictional alter ego confessed to feeling a despair at his "way of liking one subject—so far as I could tell—precisely as much as another".

HE ADDRESSED himself to women exactly as he addressed himself to men, this affronted narrator complained; he gossiped to all men alike, talking no better to clever folk than to dull. He was loud and cheerful and copious. His opinions were sound and second-rate, and of his perceptions it was too mystifying to think. He seemed quite happy in the company of the insistent Mrs Miller, telling her about the projected visit to the Fishwick family, who had a house in the Apennines. Mrs Miller nodded vigorously under the wings of the dove, and leapt into vibrant recitation. "What I love best in all the world/Is a castle, precipice-encurled/In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennines."

"Exactly so", said the benign old man, sipping his port, looking at the distant mountains, watched by Sarianna, who knew that he was braced against the Apennines as a test, that he had never since her death ventured so near the city in which he had been happy with his wife, in which he was never to set foot again. The Fishwicks' villa was in a remote village unvisited in that earlier time. He meant to attempt that climb, as he had attempted this. He needed to be undaunted. It was his idea of himself that he was undaunted. And so he was, Sarianna thought, with love.

"Then we may proceed to Venice", said the poet to the lady in the hat, "where we have very kind friends and many fond memories. I should not be averse to dying in Venice. When my time comes."

IV

"WHAT WILL HE MAKE OF US?" Miss Juliana Fishwick enquired, speaking of the imminent Robert Browning, and in fact more concerned with what her companion, Mr Joshua Riddell, did make of them, of the Fishwick family and way of life, of the Villa Colomba, perched in its coign of cliff, with its rough lawn and paved rooms and heavy ancient furnishings.

She was perhaps the only person in the company to care greatly what anybody made of anybody; the others were all either too old and easy-going or too young and intent on their journeys of discovery and complicated games. Joshua Riddell replied truthfully that he found them all enchanting, and the place too, and was sure that Mr Browning would be enchanted. He was a friend of Juliana's brother, Tom. They were at Balliol College, reading Greats. Joshua's father was a Canon of St Paul's. He lived a regular and circumspect life at home, where he was an only child, of whom much was expected. He expected very much of himself, too, though not in the line of his parents' hopes, the Bar, the House of Commons, the judiciary. He meant to be a great painter. He meant to do something quite new, which would have authority. He knew he should recognise this, when he had learned what it was, and how to do it. For the time being, living in its necessarily vague yet brilliant presence was both urgent and thwarting. He described it to no one; certainly not to Tom, with whom he was able, surprisingly, to share ordinary jokes and japes. He was entirely unused to the degree of playfulness and informality of Tom's family.

He was sketching Juliana. She was sitting, in her pink muslin, on the edge of the fountain basin. The fountain bubbled in an endless chuckling waterfall out of a cleft in the rockside. This was the lower fountain, furthest from the house, on a rough lawn on which stood an ancient stone table and chairs. Above the fountain someone had carved a round, sun-like face, flat and calmly beaming, with two uplifted, flat-palmed hands pushing through, or poised on, the rock face beside it. No one knew how old or new it was. In the upper garden, where there were flower-beds and a slower, lead-piped fountain, was a pillar or herm surmounted with a head which, Solomon Fishwick had pointed out, was exactly the same as the heads on the covers of the hominiform Etruscan funerary urns. Joshua had made several drawings of these carvings.

Juliana's living face, under her straw hat, was a different challenge. It was a face composed of softness and the smooth solid texture of young flesh, without pronounced bones, hard to capture. The blonde eyebrows did not stand out; the eyes were not emphasised by long lashes, only by a silver-white fringe which caught the sunlight here and there. The upper lip slopped upwards; the mouth was always slightly parted, the expression gently questioning, not insisting on an answer. It was an extremely pleasant face, with no

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salient characteristics. How to draw softness, and youth, and sheer *pleasantness*? Her arms should be full of an abundance of something; apples, rosebuds, a cascade of corn. She held her little hands awkwardly, clasping and unclasping them over her pink skirts.

Juliana was more used to looking than to being looked at. She supposed she was not pretty, though passable, not by any means grotesque. She had an unfortunate body for this year's narrow styles, which required height, an imposing bosom, a flat stomach, an upright carriage. She was round and short, though she had a good enough waist; corseting did violence to her, and in the summer heat in Italy was impossible. So she was conscious of rolls and half-moons and sausages of flesh which she would dearly have wished otherwise. She had pretty ankles and wrists, she knew, and had stockings of a lovely rose pink with butterfly-shells embroidered on them.

Her elder sister, Annabel, visiting in Venice, was a beauty, much courted, much consulted about dashing little hats. Juliana supposed she might herself have trouble in finding a husband. She was not remarkable. She was afraid she might simply pass from being a shepherding elder sister to being a useful aunt. She was marvellous with the little ones. She played and tumbled and comforted and cleaned and sympathised, and wanted something of her own, some place, some thought, some silence that should be hers only. She did not expect to find it. She had a practical nature and liked comfort. She had been invaluable in helping to bestow the family goods and chattels in the two heavy carriages which had made their way up the hill, from the heat of Florence to this airy and sunny garden state. Everything had had to go in: baths and fish-kettles, bolsters and jelly-moulds, cats, dogs, bird-cage and dolls' house. She had sat in the nursery carriage, with Nanny and nurse and the restive little ones: Tom and Joshua had gone ahead with her parents; and the household staff, English and Italian, had come behind. On the hot leather seat, she was impinged upon by Nurse's starched petticoats on one side, and the entwined, struggling limbs of Arthur and Gwendolen battling for space, for air on the other. When the climb became steep spare mules were attached, called *trapeli*, each with its attendant groom, groaning and coughing on the steeper and steeper turns, while the men went at strolling pace and the horses skidded and lay back in their collars, leaving the toiling to the mules. She found their patient effort exemplary: she had given them all apples when they arrived.

She was in awe of Joshua, though not of Tom. Tom teased her, as he always had, amiably. Joshua spoke courteously to her as though she was as knowledgeable as Tom about Horace and Ruskin; this was probably because he had no experience of sisters and only a limited experience of young women. Her father had taught her a little Latin and Greek; her governess had taught her French, Italian, needlework, drawing and the use of the globes, accomplishments she was now imparting to Gwendolen, and Arthur and little Edith. They seemed useless, not because they were uninteresting but because they were like feathers stitched on to a hat, dead decorations, not life.

They were life to Joshua; she could see that. His manner was fastidious and aloof, but he had been visibly shaken, before the peregrination to the Villa Colomba, by the outing they had made from Florence to Vallombrosa, with its sweeping inclines and steep declivities all clothed with the chestnut trees, dark green shades "high overarched indeed, exactly", Joshua had said, and had added, "You can see that these leaves, being deciduous, will strow the brooks, thickly, like the dead souls in Virgil and Milton's fallen angels". She had looked at the chestnut trees, suddenly seeing them, because he asked her to. They clothed the mountains here, too. The peasants lived off chestnuts: their cottages had chestnut-drying lofts, their women ground chestnut flour in stone mortars.

WHEN THEY HAD FIRST rushed into the Villa Colomba, chirruping children and pinched-mouthed, disapproving Cook, and had found nothing but echoing, cool space between the thick walls with their barred slit windows, she had looked to Joshua in alarm, while the children cried out, "Where are the chairs and tables?" He had found an immense hourglass, in a niche over the huge cavernous hearth, and said smilingly, "We are indeed in another time, a Saturnine time". Civilisation, it turned out, existed upstairs, though Cook complained mightily of ageing rusty iron pots and a ratcheted spit like a diabolical instrument of torture. Everything was massive and ancient: oak tables on a forest of oak pillars, huge leather-backed thrones, beds with heavy gilded hangings, chests ingeniously carved on clawed feet, too heavy to lift, tombs, Tom said, for curious girls. "A house for giants", Joshua said to Juliana, seeing her intrigue and anxiety both clearly. He drew her attention to the huge wrought-iron handles of the keys. "We are out of the 19th century entirely", he said.

The walls of the *salone* were furnished with a series of portraits, silver-wigged and dark-eyed and rigid. Joshua's bedroom had a fearful and appalling painting of fruits and flowers so arranged as to form a kind of human form, bristling with pineapple spines, curvaceous with melons, staring through passion-flower eyes. "*That*", said Juliana, "is bound to appeal to Mr Browning, who is interested in the grotesque." Tom said he would not make much of the family portraits, which were so similar as to argue a significant want of skill in the painter. "Either that, or a striking family resemblance", said Joshua. "Or a painter whose efforts all turn out to resemble his own appearance. I have known one or two portraiture painters like that."

Sitting now on the rim of the fountain-trough, watching him frown over his drawing, look up, cor-

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rect, frown and scribble, she wondered if by some extraordinary process her undistinguished features might be brought to resemble his keen and handsome ones. He was gipsyish in colouring, and well-groomed by habit, a kind of contradiction. Here in the mountains he wore a loose jacket and a silk scarf knotted at his neck, but knotted too neatly. He was smaller and thinner than Tom.

Joshua worked on the mouth-corner. He had chosen a very soft, silvery pencil for this very soft skin: he did not want to draw a caricature in a few sparing lines, he wanted somehow to convey the nature of the solidity of the flesh of cheek and chin. He had mapped in the rounds and ovals of the whole head and the hat brim, and the descending curve of the looped plait in the nape of Juliana's neck, and the spot where her ear came, and parts of the calm wide forehead. The shadow cast on the flesh by the circumference of the hat was another pleasant problem in tone and shading. He worked in little, circling movements, feeling out little clefts with the stub of his pencil, isolating tiny white patches of light that shone on the ledge of the lip or the point of the chin, leaving this untouched paper to glitter by contrast with his working. He filled out the plump underthroat with love; *so* it gave a little, *so* it was taut.

"I wish I could see", said Juliana. "What you are doing."

"When it is done."

It was almost as if he was touching the face, watching its grey shape swim into existence out of a spider-web of marks. His hand hovered over where the nose would be, curled a nostril, dented its flare. If anywhere he put dark marks where light should be, it was ruined. No two artists' marks are the same, no more than their thumbprints. Behind Juliana's head he did the edge, no more, of the flat stony texture of the solar face.

JULIANA KEPT STILL. Her anxieties about Mr Browning and the massive awkwardness of their temporary home were calmed. Joshua's tentative pencil began to explore the area of the eyes. The eyes were hard. They must first be modelled—the life was conferred by the pinpoint of dark and the flecks of white light, and exact distances between them. He had studied the amazing eyes created by Rembrandt van Rijn, a precise little bristling, fine, hair-like movement of the brush, a spot of crimson here, a thread of carmine there, a spider-web paste of colour out of which a soul suddenly stared. "Please look at me", he said to Juliana, "please look at me—yes, like that—and don't move." His pencil-point hovered, thinking, and Juliana's pupils contracted in the greenish halo of the iris, as she looked into the light, and blinked, involuntarily. She did not want to stare at him; it was unnatural, though his considering gaze, measuring, drawing back, turning to one side and the other, seemed natural enough. A flood of colour moved darkly up her throat, along her chin, into the planes and convexities of her cheeks. Tears collected, unbidden, without cause. Joshua noted the deepening of colour, and then the glisten, and ceased to caress the paper with the pencil. Their eyes met. What a complicated thing is this meeting of eyes, which disturbs the air between two still faces, which has its effects on the heartbeat, the hair on the wrists, the flow of blood. You can understand, Joshua thought, why poets talk of arrows, or of hooks thrown.

He said, "How odd it is to look at someone, after all, and to see their soul looking back again. How can a pencil catch that? How do we know we see each other?"

Juliana said nothing, only blushed, rosier and rosier, flooded by moving blood under her hat, and one large tear brimmed over the line of lower lashes, with their wet silkiness which Joshua had been trying to render.

"Ah, Juliana. There is no need to cry. Please, don't. I'll stop."

"No. I am being silly. I—I am not used to be looked at so intently."

"You are beautiful to look at", said Joshua, comparing the flowing colours with the placid silver-grey of his attempt to feel out her face. He put down his drawing, and touched at her cheek with a clean handkerchief. The garden hummed with insect-song and bubbled with water; he was somehow inside it, as he was when he was drawing; he looked down and there, under the tight pink muslin was the generous round of a breast. He put his two hands round the little ones that turned in her lap, stilling them like trapped birds.

"I have alarmed you, Juliana. I didn't mean that. I'm sorry."

"I don't want you to be sorry." Small but clear.

"Look at me again." It was said for him; it was what came next; they no sooner looked but they loved, a voice told him; the trouble was delightful, compelling, alarming. "Please look at me, Juliana. How often do we really look at each other?"

She had looked at him before, when he was not looking. Now she could not. And so it seemed natural for him to put his arms along the soft round shoulders, to push his face, briefly, briefly, under the brim of the hat, to rest his warm lips on the mouth-corner his pencil had touched in its distance. Juliana could hear the sea, or her own life, swirling.

"Juliana", he said, "Juliana, Juliana." And then, prompted by some little local daemon of the grass plot and the carved smiler, "Juliana is the name of the lady in one of the poems I most love. Do you know it? It is by Andrew Marvell; it is the complaint of the mower, Damon."

Juliana said she did not know it. She would like to hear it. He recited.

My mind was once the true survey
Of all these meadows fresh and gay;

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And in the greenness of the grass
Did see my thoughts as in a glass
'Til Juliana came, and she,
What I do to the grass, did to my thoughts and me.

"She was not very kind", said Juliana.

"We do not know what she was", said Joshua. "Only the effect she had upon the Mower."

He gripped the little fingers. The fingers gripped back. And then the children came bursting down the pathway under the trees, announcing an expedition to the village.

JULIANA WAS IN NO DOUBT about what had happened. It was love. Love had blossomed, or struck, like lightning, like a hawk, as it was clearly seen to do in novels and poems, as it took no time to do, voracious or sunny, in the stories she lived on, the scenes her imagination and more, her moral expectations, naturally inhabited. Love visited all who were not ridiculous or religious. Simply, she had always supposed her own, when it came, would be unrequited and lowering, was unprepared for kisses and poetry. She went to bed that night and turned on her dusty bolster among her coarse sheets, all vaguely aflame, diffusely desirous, terribly unused to violent personal happiness.

Joshua was less sure of what had happened. He too burned that night, less vaguely, more locally, making a turmoil of his coverings and tormented by aches and tensions. He recognised the old cherub for what he was, and gave him his true name, the name Juliana gave him, honourably, not wriggling into demeaning her or himself by thinking simply of lust. He went over and over every detail with reverent pleasure, the pink muslin, the trusting tear-filled eyes, the flutter of a pulse, the soft mouth, the revelations of his questing pencil. But, unlike Juliana, he was already under the rule of another daemon or cherub; he was used to accommodating his body and mind to the currents of the dictates of another imperative; he felt a responsibility also to the empty greenness that had existed in his primitive innocence, before. He wanted, he loved; but did he want enough, did he love enough? Had he inadvertently behaved dishonourably to this young creature, certainly tonight the dearest to him in the world, certainly haloed with light and warm with charm and promise of affection.

He was twenty years old. He had no experience and was confused. He finally promised himself that tomorrow he would do as he had already promised himself he would do, set off early and alone up the mountainside, to do some sketching—even painting. He would look at the land beyond habitation. He would explain to her: she would immediately understand all, since what he would say would be no more than the serious and honourable truth; that he must go away.

HE ROSE VERY early, and went into the kitchen to beg sandwiches, and a flask of wine, from Cook. Gianni was sent off to saddle his mule, to take him as far as the village, Lucchio, which could be seen clinging to the face of the mountain opposite. It was barely dawn, but Juliana was up, too; he encountered her in the dark corridor.

"I am going up the cliff, to paint", he said. "That was what I had intended to do, before."

"We must think a little", he said. "I must go up there, and think. You do understand? You will talk to me again—we will speak to each other—when I return?"

She could have said: it is nothing to me whether you go up the mountain or remain here. But she was honest.

"I shall look out for you coming back."

"Juliana", he said, "ah, Juliana."

THE MULE SKIDDED on the stones. The road was paved, after a fashion, but the stones were up-ended, like rows of jagged teeth. Gianni walked stolidly and silently behind. The road circled the hill, under chestnuts, then out on to the craggier ascent. It twisted and the sun rose; the mule passed from cold shadow to whitish glare and back again. Hot stone was very hot, Joshua thought, and cold stone very cold. He could smell stone of both kinds, as well as the warm hairy sweating mule and the glossy rubbed ancient leather. He looked backwards and forwards, along the snaking line of the river that cut its way about and about between the great cones of the Apennines. The sky had a white clearness and emptiness, not yet gleaming, which was essentially Italian. He knew the mountains round: the Libro Aperto, or open book, the Prato Fiorito, velvety and enamelled with flowers, the Monte Pellegrino, covered with silvery edible thistles and inhabited, once, by hermits whose diet they were.

He thought about the mountains, with reverence and curiosity, and his thoughts on the mountains, like those of many of his contemporaries, were in large part the thoughts of John Ruskin, who had seen them clearly, as no one else, it seemed, had ever seen them, and had declared that this clarity of vision was the essence of truth, virtue, and good art, which were, in this, one. Mountains are the bones of the earth, he had written. "But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature; that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath." Joshua thought about this, and looked at the working knobs of bone at the base of the mule-neck, under their thin layer of skin, and remembered, formally and then excitedly, the search for Juliana's bone under the round cheek.

Ruskin was a geologist. His ideals of painting were founded on an intricate and analytical knowledge of how the movement of water shaped and unmade and

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shifted the eternal hills, of how clefts were formed, and precipices sheered. It had been a revelation to the young Joshua to read in *Modern Painters* how very young was man's interest in these ancient forms. The Greeks had seen them merely as threats or aids to the adventures of gods and heroes; medieval man had on the whole disliked anything wild or savage, preferring order and cultivation, trellised gardens and bowers to wild woods or louring cliffs. John Ruskin would have delighted in the medieval names of the hills through which he now travelled: the Open Book, the Flowery Meadow, the Pilgrim's Mount came straight out of Dante into the 19th century. Ruskin had characterised modern art, with some disparagement, as the "service of clouds". The medieval mind had taken pleasure in the steady, the definite, the luminous, but the moderns rejoiced in the dark, the sombre. Our time, Ruskin had said, and Joshua had joyfully learned, was the true Dark Ages, devoted to smokiness and burnt umber. Joshua had not understood about the necessity of brightness and colour until he came south this first time, until he saw the light, although intellectually he had been fired by Ruskin's diatribes against Victorian darkness and ugliness in all things, in dress, in manners, in machines and chimneys, in storm-clouds and grottoes.

Only, in Paris, he had seen something which changed, not the desire for brightness, but the ideas about the steady, the definite, the luminous. Something which should have helped him with the soft expanse of Juliana's pink dress, which he remembered, turning a corner and seeing the village again, clutching the cliff like thorn-bushes with half their roots in air. It was to do with the flesh and the muslin, the tones in common, the tones that were not shared, a blue in the pink cloth you could pick up in the vein or the eyelid, the wrist, a shimmer, a thread. . . . The hot saddle shifted beneath him: the mule sighed: the man sighed. Gianni said, "*Lucchio, una mezz'ora.*" The white air was also blue and the blue white light.

WHEN THEY GOT THERE, there was something alarming about this tenacious and vertiginous assembly of buildings, peacefully white in the mounting heat, chill in their dark aspects, all blindly shuttered, their dark life inside their doors. Houses stood where they were planted, where a level floor, or floors could be found for them—often they were different heights on different sides. Many had tiny gardens fronting the empty air, and Gianni pointed out to Joshua, in two different instances, a toddling child, stiff-skirted, bonnetted, tethered by the waist by a length of linen to a hook in the door-posts. Even the church bells were grounded, caged in iron frames outside the church door, safe, Joshua could only suppose, from vibrating unstably against the overhanging rock-shelf.

Here Joshua parted from Gianni and the mules; they would meet again near the bells on the roadway, an hour or so from sunset. He took the path that curved up out of the village, which passed the ancient fountain where the girls came and went barefoot, carrying great copper vessels on their heads, swaying. At the fountain he replenished his water bottle, and moistened his face and neck. Then he went on up. Above the village was a ruined and much decayed castle, its thick outer wall continuous with the rock face, its courtyard littered with shattered building blocks. He thought of stopping here to draw the ancient masonry, but after reflection went on up. He had a need to study the wholly inhuman. His path, a branching, vertiginous sheep-track, now wound between whitish sheer pillars of stone; his feet dislodged rubble and a powdery dust. He liked the feeling of the difficult going-up, and his step was springy. If he got far enough up and round he would have a downwards vantage-point for sketching the improbable village. He thought alternately about Ruskin and about Juliana.

Ruskin disliked the Apennines: he found their limestone monotonous in hue, grey and toneless, utterly melancholy. He had expended several pages of exact lyrical prose on this gloomy colouring, pointing out that it was the colouring Dante gave his Evil-pits in the *Inferno*, malignant grey, he gleefully recorded, akin to the robes of the purgatorial angel which were of the colour of ashes, or earth dug dry. Ashes, to an Italian mind, wrote Ruskin beside his London coals, necessarily meant *wood-ashes*—very pale—analogous to the hue seen on the sunny side of Italian hills, produced by the scorching of the ground, a dusty and lifeless whitish grey, utterly painful and oppressive. He preferred the strenuous, masculine, mossy and complicated Alps, awesome and sublime. Joshua had not really seen the Alps, but he found these smaller mountains beautiful, not oppressive, and their chalky paleness interesting, not dulling.

Ruskin believed the great artists were those who had never despised anything, however small, of God's making. If he was prepared to treat the Apennine rocks as though they had been created perhaps only by a minor daemon or demiurge, Joshua, on Ruskin's own principles, was not. If he could find a means of recording the effects of these ashy whitenesses, of the reddish iron-stains in the stone, of the way one block stood against another, of the root-systems of the odd, wind-sculpted trees, he would be content. He would, if he could find his vantage, "do" the view of the village. He would also, for that love of the true forms of things desiderated by his master, do studies of the stones as they were, of the scrubby things that grew.

He found his perch, in time; a wideish ledge, in a cleft with a high triangular shadow bisecting it, diminishing as the sun climbed. He thought of it as his eyrie. From it he would see the village, a little lower, winding round the conical form of the mountain like a clinging wreath, crowned by a fantastic cluster of crags

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all sky-pointing like huge hot inverted icicles, white on the white-blue sky. These forms were paradoxical, strong yet aerial and delicate like needles, reminding him of the lightness of lace on the emptiness, yet stone of earth. He took out his sketching-glass and filled it, arranged his paints and his chalks and his pencils, became wholly involved in the conversion of estimated distances to perceived relative sizes and tones. The problem was to convey this blanched, bony world with shadows which should, by contrast, form and display its dazzle. He tried both with pencil and with washes of colour. Ruskin said: "Here we are, then, with white paper for our highest light, and visible illuminated surface for our deepest shadow, set to run the gauntlet against nature, with the sun for her light, and vacuity for her gloom."

Joshua wrestled with these limitations, in a glare which made it hard for him to judge the brightness even of his own paper-surface. He was very miserable; his efforts took shape and solidified into failures of vision. He was supremely happy; unaware of himself and wholly aware of rock formations, sunlight and visible empty air, of which he became part, moment by moment and then timelessly, the notation of things seen being no more than the flow of his blood, necessary for continuance in this state.

At some point he became quite suddenly hungry, and took out of his knapsack his oily but agreeable packages of bread, meat, eggs, cheese. He devoured all, exhausted, as though his life was in danger, and put away his chicken bones and eggshells, for had not Ruskin himself complained that modern man came to the mountains not to fast but to feast, leaving glaciers covered with bones and eggshells. He had an idea of himself tearing at his food like a young bird on its ledge. Wiping his fingers, pouring more water for his work, he remembered Juliana, confusedly and from a distance, a softness in the corner of his consciousness, a warmth to which he would return when he returned to himself. He could never hurt Juliana, never.

Behind the stone he had chosen for his seat were the bleached remains of some other creature's meal; skeletal pinions and claws, a triangular pointed skull, a few snail shells, wrecked and pierced. He made a quick water-colour sketch of these, interested in the different whites and creams and greys of bone, shell, and stone. And shadow. He was particularly pleased with his rendering of a snail shell, the arch of its entrance intact, the dome of the cavern behind shattered to reveal the pearly interior involution. These small things occupied as much space on the paper as the mountains. Their shadows were as intricate, though different.

When he came to look out at the land again, the air had changed. Near, it danced; farther away, on the horizon, white cloud was piling itself up and throwing out long arms from peak to peak; under the arms were horizontal bars of black shadow which seemed impossible where the sky had been so bright, so even. He set himself to draw this advance, watching the cloud hang along the precipices, waiting to stoop, and then engulf them. A wind began to blow, fitfully, rattling his sketch-book. The river-bed darkened: sounds were stilled that he had hardly noticed, insect-songs and the odd bird-call.

The thing that he had seen in Paris, the thing that he knew would change his ideas about painting, was a large canvas by Monsieur Monet, a painting precisely of mist and fog, *Vétheuil in the Fog*. It had been rejected by its prospective purchaser because it had not enough paint on the canvas. It was not clear and definite. It was vague, it painted little more than a swirl and shimmer of light on the curtain of white water-particles through which the shapes of the small town were barely visible, a slatey upright stroke here, a pearly faint triangle of possible roof or spire there. You could see, miraculously, that if you could see the town, which you could not, it would be reflected in the expanse of river at the foot of the canvas, which you could also not see. Monsieur Monet had found a solution to the problem posed by Ruskin, of how to paint light, with the small range of colours available: he had trapped light in his surface, light itself was his subject. His paint was light. He had painted, not the thing seen, but the act of seeing.

So now, Joshua thought, as the first thin films of mist began to approach his eyrie, I want to note down these shifting, these vanishing veils. Through them, in the valley on the other side, he could see a perpendicular race of falling arrows dark and glistening, the hailstorm sweeping. The speed of its approach was beautiful. He made a kind of pattern on his paper of the verticals and the fleeciness, the different thickness and thinness of the vapour infiltrating his own ledge. He must be ready to pack up fast when it descended or his work would be ruined. When it came, it came in one fierce onslaught, a blast in his face, an impenetrable white darkness. He staggered a little, under the blows of the ice-bullets, put up an arm, took a false step, still thinking of Ruskin and Monet, and fell. And it was all over. Except for one or two unimaginable moments, a clutch at life, a gasp of useless air, a rush of adrenalin, a shattering of bone and brain, the vanishing between instants of all that warmth and intelligence and aspiration.

Down at the Villa Colomba they had been grateful for their thick walls and windows. The garden had been whipped and the flowers flattened, the white dark impenetrable. It lasted only ten minutes, maybe a quarter of an hour. Afterwards the children went out and came back crying that it was like Aladdin's palace. Everywhere, in the courtyard, was a glittering mass of green and shining stones, chestnut leaves bright with wet and shredded, hail-stones as large as hazelnuts. Arthur and Gwendolen ran here and there gathering handfuls of these, tossing

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them, crying "Look at my diamonds". The solid, the enduring, the familiar landscape smiled again in the washed sunlight. Juliana went out with the children, looked up at the still shrouded peaks, and filled her hands too with the jewels, cold, wet, gleaming, running away between her outstretched fingers.

SARIANNA BROWNING RECEIVED a letter, and wrote a letter. It took time for both these letters to reach their destinations, for the weather had deteriorated rapidly after those first storms, the mules could travel neither down from the Villa Colomba nor up to the paradise of coolness and quiet. Whips of rain flung themselves around the smiling tops; lightning cracked; tracks were rivers; Robert complained of the deep grinding of the pain that might be rheumatism and might be his liver. The envelope when she opened it was damp and pliant. Phrases stood out: "terrible accident . . . taken from us at the height of his powers . . . we trust, with his Maker . . . our terrible responsibility to his father and mother. . . . Villa Colomba unbearable to us now . . . we trust you will understand, and accept our deepest apologies and regrets . . . we know Mr Browning would not probably desire to visit us in Florence, though of course. . . ."

Sarianna wrote to Mrs Bronson. "Terrible accident . . . we trust, with his Maker . . . Robert not at his best . . . weather unsettled . . . hope to make our way now to Venice, since Florence is out of the question. . . ."

THE SKY was like slate. The poet was trapped in the pleasant room. Sheets of water ran down his windows and collected on his balcony. He thought of other deaths. Five years ago he had been planning to ascend another mountain with another woman; going to rouse her, after his morning swim, full of life, he had come round her balcony and looked through her window to see her kneeling composed and unnatural, head bowed to the ground. She had been still warm when he went in and released her from this posture. Remembering this, he went through the shock of her dead warmth again, and shuddered.

He had gone up the mountain, all the same, alone, and had made a poem of it, a poem which clambered with difficulty around the topic of what, if anything, survived; of which hands, if any, moulded or received us. He had been half-ashamed of his assertion of his own liveliness and vigour, half-exalted by height and oxygen and achievement, as he had meant to be. This dead young man was unknown to him. For a moment his imagination reached after him, and imagined him, in his turn, as it was his nature to imagine, reaching after the unattainable, up there. Man's reach must exceed his grasp. Or what's a Heaven for? Perhaps the young man was a very conventional and unambitious young man: he did not know: it was his idea, that height went with reaching, even if defeated, as we all are, and must be.

Over dinner, Mrs Miller asked him if he would write a poem on the tragedy; this might, she suggested, bring comfort to the bereaved parents. No, he said. No, he would not. And elaborated, for good manners' sake. Even the greatest tragedies in his life had rarely stirred him directly to composition. They left him mute. He should hate any mechanical attempt to do what would only acquire worth from being a spontaneous outflow. Poems arose like birds setting off from stray twigs of facts to flights of more or less distance, unpredictably and often after many years. This was not to say that this tragedy, any tragedy, did not affect his whole mind and have its influence, more or less remarkably, on what he wrote. As he explained, his attention elsewhere, what he had explained before and would explain again (say, when Miss Teena Rochfort set fire to her skirts with a spark in her sewing-basket, in 1883), he thought of the young painter, now dead, and of his son, whose nude sculptures had been objects of moral opprobrium to ladies like Mrs Miller, and of Mrs Miller's hat. There was a poem in that, in her stolid and disagreeable presence, bedizened with murdered innocents, and the naked life of art and love. Lines came into his head.

What (Excuse the interruption) clings
Half-savage-like around your hat?
Ah, do they please you? Wild-bird wings. . . .

Yes. "Clothed with murder." That would do. A black irritability was assuaged. He smiled with polite enthusiasm.

THE LADY SITS in the window. The scholar, turning the browned pages, discovers the letter that she will receive. At first, in the story that he is reading and constructing, this letter appears to be hopeful. The poet and his sister will not go further south. They will set their steps towards Venice. But it is not to be. Further letters are exchanged. Torrential rain in Bologna . . . Robert's pains worse . . . medical opinion advisable . . . roads impassable . . . deeply regret disappointing you and even more our own disappointment . . . return to London. An opportunity has been missed. A tentative love has not flowered. Next year, however, is better. The poet returns to Venice, meets in the lady's drawing-room the Pretender to the French and Spanish thrones, discusses with him the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask, exposes himself, undaunted on the Lido, to sea-fret and Adriatic gust, reads tombstones, kisses hands, and remarks on the seagulls.

Aunt Juliana kept, pressed in the family Bible, a curious portrait of a young girl, who looked out of one live eye and one blank, unseeing one, oval like those of angels on monumental sculpture.

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Allen Curnow

Narita

Turning its eyes from side to side, inquiring
brightly, the head of the worm issues
from the door for arrivals.

The door for departures is where papers are
handed in. There are many of these,
all numbered. Never look back.

Between the two the meantime is all there is.
It passes of itself. Your cabin
crew girls are for off-duty

fantasies. Abaft the loo the tail section
ruptures, the sky inhales heavily,
a change of plan is announced,

all four hundred, some gifted or beautiful
or with greedy heirs, have to die now,
only to make sure of you

this instant sooner or later than you think.
The prettiest accessories, like
silk scarf, matching lipstick, badge

of rank are brightness fallen from the air, you
will never see it. The uniformed
personnel most pitiably

heaped, colours of daedal feathers, the smell of
burning, a ring'd finger, a baby's
foot bagged for the mortuary.

No, you will never see it. Wish yourself then
the best of Lucifer's luck. This indoors
world's roof is geodetic,

as good as any heaven, and better lit
than the broad daylight it simulates,
out of hearing of the rising

and the falling scream and sight of the nearest
numbered gate. Picture to yourself some
small green hills with ginkgo trees.

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Christopher Wiseman

Postcards Home

I hold them. Two cards so well preserved
That except for slightly faded ink and sepia
Photographs they could have been written
Last year. Both show Abbeville, the first
Franked Army Post Office, 7 July 1916;
The other, three days later, simply The Somme,
As if it were some holiday resort.
The first seems hurried, nervous.

This is a fine cathedral which you can see
In the distance. The streets are just as narrow
As they look. Dy.

The second different,
More relaxed.

My dear little Nancie,
Again I am sending you a view of this old town.
I am now on my way back from the front
Line. I got all my men there quite safely.
The weather is beautiful but so hot. I have
Written a long letter to mother. Hope
You are doing well and have written me a nice
Long letter. Love and kisses from Daddy.

Grandfather, I never knew you. You died early.
I think you could have taught me, steadied me.
God knows what you described in that long letter.
I read the cards again, that calm unshaken
Handwriting, for all you knew your final words,
And I wonder what they felt when these came
Through the door. A simple soaring excitement
For the girl, remembered from so far away,
So strong she kept them for sixty-five years.
For the woman a great rinse of relief from nightmares
Of mortars and barbed-wire, from the immense terrors.
Tears in her room, perhaps, cleaning, then
A letter back.

Such an ordinary address—
15 Moore Street, South Shore, Blackpool, England.

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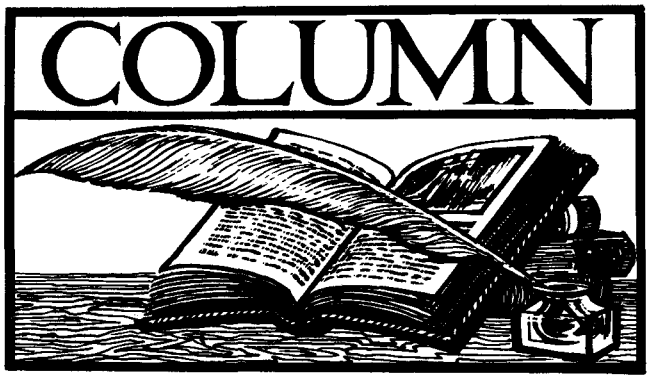

"NEW PHILOSOPHIES and sex are the starches and sugars of a mental diet." The remark is not mine: it was made by the teacher I most respected at school. His name was Eynon Smith. He was killed by a bomb on the night of 20 February 1944.

Eynon (as we called him among ourselves) ran a form that was known as "Modern Special"; most people entered it at about the age of fifteen. In the stately home to which the school had been evacuated from London, Modern Special occupied a large, light, airy room on the top floor, with windows overlooking the garden and the pine-covered park. From the door, it looked almost empty; but at the far end, trestle tables were arranged in three sides of a square. On the fourth side, facing the door, under the windows, was another table with a row of encyclopaedias on it. Behind them—dramatically distant from the door, like Mussolini—sat Eynon Smith.

At that time, he was a burly, slightly balding man in his early forties. The lines of his face gave a faint impression of rakishness, tempered by keen intelligence. His cheeks had a touch of colour, offset by a smooth, pale forehead and firm lips. His eyes were grey-blue, a little forbidding and bleak. "Composure" was the word his face suggested: so did his rather feline pose. One leg might be curled under him; his head would sink into his shoulders; two long hands would cup his chin. He looked watchful and competent, like the cats he so much admired.

In London before the War, it was said, Eynon had once taken to attending school in formal morning clothes, in protest at pupils' (and colleagues') scruffy appearance. In wartime, though he still referred to colleagues as "ushers", he went to the opposite extreme, favouring vivid ties, a checkered jacket, green corduroys, and gumboots. Powerful, upright, and broad-shouldered, he moved stealthily, giving an impression of easy and practised muscular control, with great reserves of energy. In normal moods, his voice was quiet and civilised, addressing us as adults—though once, faced with idleness and lying, he turned purple with rage. As the terrified culprit obeyed orders and fled the room, pursued by a well-aimed encyclopaedia, Eynon turned to the rest of us, his face its normal colour again, and said with a slight smile: "I think that'll deal with *him* for a bit."

Some people, more sensitive than I was, disliked Eynon's role-playing methods. For the sake of argument, he would make out ingenious cases for outrageous propositions. His aim was to stir our adolescent prejudice, forcing us to think and debate. Formally, Modern Special taught a variety of subjects: politics, economics, geography, foreign relations, logic, Latin, and even bookkeeping; but much of the time was spent in discussion, often arising from one of the many new books that Eynon was always reading. What we chiefly learned from him was how to learn—to concentrate, to "gut" a book, to check assertions, to compare and make notes, to test hypotheses, to distrust first reactions, to train memory, to harness imagination, to think systematically, but be open to fresh ideas.

The first months in the form were the most painful: they involved questioning most of the notions with which we had grown up. I made a note of some of them at the time: they included the "Left-Right" political spectrum; the contrast of "mind" and "matter"; human equality or inequality; current views of sex and the family; the authority of "science"; and claims that "telepathy is impossible" or "travel broadens the mind". More disconcerting still, in wartime, was bringing rational scrutiny to bear on official slogans and assumptions. I well remember in 1942, before any Russian soldier had set foot on Polish territory, before any of us had heard of the Lublin "government", and at a time when public admiration for the Soviet Union was still at its height, Eynon's remark that the nevertheless visible signs of disagreement over Poland's future were "the most significant and alarming political development" since the beginning of the War. Equally unusual at that time was his chilling prediction of Europe's likely economic plight once the War was over. To young people who on the whole believed the Ministry of Information, such warnings seemed shockingly unpatriotic.

As time went on, shock tactics gave way to the exploration of fresh fields. Again, we weren't dosed with tabloid information, but helped to find out for ourselves. *What* was our own choice: philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, political theory, history, literature, painting, architecture, business management—all figured on our private reading-lists. It was like reaching the top of a hill and seeing the landscape spread out before us: infinite riches and possibilities, with any number of paths. What Eynon offered was a compass and a provisional map.

One vital item of equipment was scepticism, often in the form of humour. Some of our best discussions with Eynon were prompted by the worst books. Reading aloud a piece of special pleading, he would challenge us to spot the dishonesty: it might be a political pamphlet, religious propaganda, a newspaper editorial, or a statement by some self-appointed spokesman. One news item concerned Women's Land Army personnel, billeted on a farmer, flitting around the house in underwear. "Farmers don't like this sort of thing", some twit had complained. Eynon smiled sardonically. Thus we learned not to generalise from inadequate data. We learned to listen to what W. K. Clifford, the mathematician, called "the still small voice that whispers '*Fiddlesticks*'".

I REMEMBERED that phrase, which I'd first heard from Eynon, when two young friends of mine from different countries decided to attach themselves to the *ashram* movement of

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Mohan Chandra Rajneesh. When I learned more about life in a Rajneesh *ashram*, I remembered Eynon's remark about new philosophies and sex. What "Bhagwan" Rajneesh was offering, it seemed, was an unlimited, soulful orgy of both sugar and starch.

One of my disciple friends, an English boy, was the son of novelist parents, by then divorced. The other, a Dutch girl, came from a large, stable, loving family; but she too had emerged from unhappy marital experiments. It was understandable in both cases that a movement offering transcendental experience plus sacred and profane love, in a family atmosphere with a father-like guru, would have very powerful appeal. In both cases, too, the disciples' parents were religious believers: so both were accustomed to looking beyond the immediate material world.

It was tough on the parents. The Dutch family was especially disconcerted, having greater expectations of family life. Now, the generous, idealistic, and hard-working father was denounced as bourgeois and conventional—but tapped, nevertheless, for financial help. The English pair took matters more in their faltering stride. Even so, their son's new allegiance added a fresh worry to the family break-up—and also culminated in appeals for funds.

Neither family, I think, was particularly upset by the Rajneesh trappings—the beards, the orange robes, the 108-beaded necklaces or *malas* that disciples wore. Nor, before scares about herpes, cervical cancer, and later AIDS, did the *ashrams*' sexual antics seem much more distressing than the young people's previous exploits, limited though these had been. What really struck home in both instances, I think, was a double uncertainty. How had the children's upbringing starved their need for some religious dimension in their lives? And would the *ashram* genuinely meet it?

In retrospect, the answer to the first question seems clear. Conventional life in the West has indeed left metaphysical hungers unsatisfied; and city existence, with its inbuilt loneliness, creates a powerful urge for friends. A living church or temple, a real social circle, and expressed awareness of what may lie beyond contingent reality—all these my friends' previous environment had failed to supply. But how far did Rajneesh's movement fill the gap?

Belatedly reading the fullest account yet of a disciple's experience,[1] it's hard not to feel that scepticism was always justified. Right from the start, "Bhagwan"—the term means "God" or "The Blessed One", and was given to Rajneesh in 1971—used on his disciples the old Mutt-and-Jeff routine employed by interrogators. One, that is, behaves brutally; the other cajoles with cigarettes, sympathy, and tea. Rajneesh was both Mutt and Jeff in one. All gentle love and flattery—then cruel banishment; refusal on grounds of principle, then consent because the principle had changed. The only rule seemed to be organised caprice. It was enchanting: it was a holiday from Western consistency. It was enthralling: it created dependence. It was alarming: it blew people this way and that.

If the new philosophy was worship, Old Testament style, the sex was New Testament love. Hugh Milne, Rajneesh's former bodyguard, obviously enjoyed it: but physical satisfaction (and self-satisfaction) was enhanced by spiritual faith. As Crébillon the younger remarked, pleasure always gains from being ennobled. Whether or not this fact was cynically exploited, the love as well as the sex which the *ashrams* offered became a powerful attraction to the lonely, the lusty, and the lost.

When the Rajneesh movement closed the Poona *ashram*, and Bhagwan moved to America, further cracks appeared in the dream. In 1981, the Rajneeshees bought Big Muddy, a desolate ranch in Oregon. Defying zoning laws, they turned it into a settlement, imported followers, and ran their usual businesses. They used quasi-Rachmanite methods to induce local residents to leave the nearby town, and gerrymandered elections there by buying up houses and establishing voting rights. They fortified the ranch, and armed its guards with rifles and machine-guns. Rajneesh acquired 90 Rolls-Royces. As in Poona, debts were left unpaid. At length, after frenzied legal shenanigans, the law caught up with the movement's leaders. They were fined, and they scattered. Investigations continue. The sorry tale isn't over yet.

Hugh Milne got out before the showdown—and spent some months having withdrawal symptoms, and going in fear for his life. My friends have also left the movement; but both feel that something's missing, that what they had was valuable, that there was virtue in the dream.

THINKING OF THAT, I'm reminded of Robert Browning's poem "Mr Sludge, 'The Medium'". Inspired by—though not necessarily based on—the fraudulent spiritualist Daniel Home, the poem is a brilliantly contemptible confession. As G. K. Chesterton put it, Sludge "confesses not only fraud, but things which are to the natural man more difficult to confess", including cowardice. "And then, when the last of his loathsome secrets has been told, when he has nothing left either to gain or to conceal, then he rises up into a perfect bankrupt sublimity and makes the great avowal which is the whole pivot and meaning of the poem."

> *Now for it, then! Will you believe me, though?*
> *You've heard what I confess; I don't unsay*
> *A single word: I cheated when I could,*
> *Rapped with my toe-joints, set sham hands at work,*
> *Wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink,*
> *Rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor-match,*
> *And all the rest; believe that: believe this,*
> *By the same token, though it seems to set*
> *The crooked straight again, unsay the said,*
> *Stick up what I've knocked down; I can't help that:*
> *It's truth! I somehow vomit truth today.*
> *This trade of mine—I don't know, can't be sure*
> *But there was something in it, tricks and all!*

I'm not suggesting that Rajneesh was necessarily a fraud. That's only one possibility. A second is that he deceived himself. Certainly, greed and vanity, and willingness to be

[1] *Bhagwan: The God That Failed.* By HUGH MILNE. Caliban Books (17 South Hill Park Gardens, London NW3), £12.00.

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dominated by one or other of his closest women disciples—these appear to have been part of his make-up, especially towards the end of his American career. There is a further possibility: that he began as a genuine philosopher and guru, only later succumbing to self-deception, more deliberate deceit, or a mixture of both.

And—disturbing as the thought may be—there's yet another hypothesis worth attention. Graham Greene, in *The Power and the Glory*, popularised the Catholic belief that a priestly vocation can survive in even a sinner, a "whisky priest". Was Rajneesh a whisky—or Rolls-Royce—guru? Did he have something to offer, despite his sins?

My ex-Rajneeshee friends are naturally inclined to think he had. Hugh Milne believes that Bhagwan could indeed communicate spiritual strength; he also believes that both he and Bhagwan had telepathic power. None of that is disprovable. What's certain, and attested by visitors as hard-nosed as Bernard Levin, is Bhagwan's hypnotic attraction as a speaker. But then it behoves great orators not to misuse their gifts.

It also behoves gurus not to make themselves indispensable. What saddens me about my ex-Rajneeshee friends is that they were never taught to fly the nest. True teachers don't create disciples: they train free men and women. That's why, guru for guru, I much prefer Eynon Smith.

M

The Rise of an April Leaf

Puckered,
Naked,
Grizzly,
Clenched,
Ugly as a newborn face:
Scared to let myself go:
And where can I go
Except towards death?
And what if I grow
In the wrong directions,
Abnormal or twisted,
And how do you do it anyway?
Thoughts crumpled,
Feelings crushed,
Perhaps I'm not even a leaf,
Just scared to stand out
From the crowded branches?
What am I?—yellow?
Or just painfully shy
Soft virgin green,
Closed against the urging sun?
Do I have to *do* anything?
Will I just become—me?
Or do I have to force myself out?
Safer to sit tight:
But then I get scared
The rest of the branch
Is unfolding faster;
Best to let go, then:
But what if my flower
Hardly out of bud
Gets pollinated???
The May blossom light
Of the still warm evening:
The birdsong high
Above distant traffic:
God become mild
And expansive, beaming:
The breathless wind:
All give their answer:
He who saves his dances
Will never be a dancer.

G. Calway

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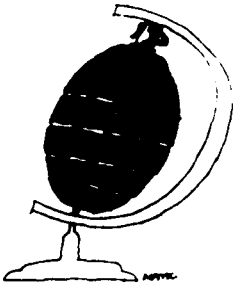
NOTES & TOPICS

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

A Good Season for Terrorism



I SUSPECT that the last several years will be going down in history as the time of a great victory for international State terrorism. There was a time when it looked as if the verdict would go the other way, but in the end the democracies, even the most powerful democracy of them all, reverted to their bad old habits. They traded temporary truces and the release of a handful of hostages for a discreet but all the more significant surrender to the broad political designs of the terrorist States. They did not summon up the nerve to take the decisive step of categorically and unanimously identifying and indicting those States, and then mounting a counter-attack proportionate in its impact to the damage inflicted by the aggressors.

At least, they did not do so all together; and those States which made clear-cut moves were either cold-shouldered by the rest, or supported with a spineless reluctance more humiliating than a rebuke. The US bombing of Libya in April 1986 was the first operation in which a big democratic power at long last retaliated against terrorism on its own ground, the ground of international strategy. But this escalation brought the Americans hostile reactions from most of the Western European nations, which proclaimed the "ineffectiveness" of such methods, in spite of their palpable results in the lull of the following months.

True, it is always possible to close our eyes to the facts, or to ascribe them to other causes. Nevertheless, one European country did finally speak out to state the problem in the terms without whose clear definition it will never be resolved. After the trial and condemnation by a British court of a Syrian terrorist agent, specifically identified as such, the British government at once decided to sever diplomatic relations with Syria.

This move produced more confusion than support among the other West European nations, always ready to boast of their own matchless steadfastness in the crusade against terrorism, while at the same time buckling at the knees and making believe that they simply did not know where the attacks were coming from. I shall pass over Greece, except to say that it never misses a single opportunity to take the side of terrorist régimes—so much so that one cannot help beginning to ask whether there is really any place for it inside the Europe of the Twelve.

Our French reactions, which consisted of denying the very proofs which had caught the Syrians red-handed, so as not to have to draw the inevitable conclusions, were more intriguing—because, in the first phase, during the wave of attacks in Paris in September, Jacques Chirac had placed these events in their proper political and strategic framework. He defined them, correctly, as "a form of warfare", and warned the manipulating States of a punitive deterrent response. The softening of the French attitude, which did not go unnoticed since it brought us a barrage of jeering from the international press, ran the risk of steering the alleged anti-terrorist struggle back into the groove of capitulation, disguised as "shrewd secret negotiation".

This method, so vaunted for its pragmatic efficiency, is the very same approach which has been demonstrating its long-term lack of efficiency ever since the mid-1970s. The few short-term remissions, granted as sops to our illusory realism, were bought at the price of a massive deterioration overall. And this is only natural: the more profitable we make each act of terrorism, through our concessions, the more we encourage our enemies to invest in more such acts. So what reasons can have caused the French Government to get the same sum wrong that had been botched before?

Did it equate the freeing of a few hostages with promising Syria to spare it the disgrace of designation as the generator of bloodshed? But it is precisely that kind of trade-off which has yielded no results for the last ten years! With good reason, since the very fact of making the offer shows the opponent how useful it is to take more hostages. And since there is an inexhaustible supply of hostages (and not only in the Lebanon, although the eminent Terry Waite is still there), what good business it is for a terrorist State to give one or two away from time to time as loss-leaders that bring in a fat political ransom!

Under the conditions of democracy, to sacrifice the future to the short term is an irresistible temptation—for humanitarian reasons, but especially before an election. That is what prompted President Reagan too to give way in secret to Iranian blackmail in order to have hostages freed before the elections of November 1986. It did not prevent the loss of his slender majority in the Senate, but it did destroy the moral authority of the USA in the sphere of the anti-terrorist struggle. Likewise, to achieve a temporary suspension of attacks by appeasing a terrorist dictator instead of disabling him from causing further harm—to grant (and even to anticipate) his every political, financial, and military wish in the hope of establishing some sort of collusion in the management of attacks between victim and aggressor—that is as good as signing the order for the next wave of attacks.

Those attacks may not come by the same route as previous ones; but they will come. Agents too tarred with the Middle Eastern brush are stood down for a while; and it is *Action Directe* in Paris that murders the chairman of Renault, Georges Besse. The main thing is to keep up the tempo of insecurity among the democracies. When we hear the French Government, following the death of Georges Besse, saying

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that it "does not rule out" links between individual terrorists and international organisations (and "firmly intending" what it calls "close cooperation" with the West German anti-terrorist forces), it is like listening to a replay of the 1970s. The same tune was played in 1985 after the murder of General Audran. If our experts are still at the stage of wondering about the links between *Action Directe* (whose leaders are now in the police's hands), the "Red Army Fraction" in West Germany, and the *Cellules communistes combatantes* in Belgium, and about the connections between these three bands and the Middle East—as well as the secret services of the Eastern bloc—it is hardly surprising that their score is so low.

THE ONLY REMAINING SOLUTION today is a world-wide programme for dealing with terrorism. The compartmentalisation which consists of considering each action and each group as an element separate from all the rest, and calling for "personalised" solutions, is now bankrupt. It depends on a false analysis which tends only to evade certain difficult but essential political confrontations. There is no point in squandering energy on tracking down a lot of replaceable, interchangeable thugs. We must have the courage to go straight to the criminal capitals, the spawning grounds. If we lack that courage, then we should at any rate have the candour to announce that we have lost the terrorist war, that we are asking for a truce, and that we are ready to pay the price. . . .

The price for satisfying Syria would be the abdication of all French and, more generally, all Western influence in the Middle East. That is the aim which has been pursued by Damascus, with Soviet support, ever since 1978, the year when it became clear that the Syrians intended to use the Lebanese-Palestinian conflict to annex the Lebanon, in fact if not in law. Since that time, Assad has conducted a programme of assassination to eliminate all the men who stood in the way of his design—Kamal Jumblatt, the French Ambassador Louis Delamare, Beshir Gemayel, the French and American soldiers of the Intervention Force, and so on. In the West, he has called down a plague of terror against those countries that dared to have policies contrary to his own in the Middle East.

That is why it is hard to understand the French Government when it brandishes the "*rôle historique*" of France in that region, to justify pleading in favour of Assad against the British or the Germans. Since Assad and his Soviet friends are precisely the ones who would like to put an end to this "historic role"—and, moreover, are well on the way to succeeding—one fails to see just what we gain by our zeal to reinforce their position.

We even take things to the point of trying to help Assad out of his severe economic straits instead of using them to weaken him. By weighing in to expel a number of Syrian diplomats proved to have been involved in a terrorist attack, West Germany did not follow London's example of severing relations altogether. But its action still left France standing alone in its lenience towards Assad: alone in line with Moscow, which fell over itself to cover up for Damascus and to hurl insults at Bonn. The fervour we invest in rescuing the reputation and finances of régimes that long to see us dead will deserve deep analysis, even psychoanalysis, in the future curricula of diplomatic schools.

One can do nothing but praise the French determination to remain on stage so as to carry out our "historic role"; it is the method adopted that must leave the audience baffled. The same applies to the American consignments of arms to Iran. Granted that it is normal and even necessary, in the perspective of anticipated upheavals in Tehran, that the USA should rebuild Iranian policy and not leave the initiative to a patiently hovering Soviet Union. But did President Reagan have to pursue, or rather compromise, this legitimate design by shipping arms in order to recover hostages, all the time denying—beyond all belief—the slightest connection between the two facts? And did the USA have to absolve Iran, all of a sudden, of any responsibility for the attacks, and even—which must ring strange to American ears—for the taking of hostages?

It is surrealistic to assert, with the utmost French nonchalance, that there is "no proof" of the wrongs done by the Ayatollahs. It is this kind of behaviour which threatens to remove all credibility, coherence, and effectiveness from the common fight against terrorism—the fight that the democracies seemed determined to pursue only a short while ago. To make matters worse, instead of taking the battle to the enemy we end up, as usual, by squabbling among ourselves inside the democratic camp. Each member of the camp derides the spineless actions of the other and condemns any rare manifestations of real energy.

ALL THESE ZIGZAGS convey the feeling of a lack of political vision. They reveal many *calculs politiques*, but no broad perspective. The Middle East and its terrorism, the destruction in the Lebanon of the sole democracy in the Arab world, and the gradual elimination of the Western powers—all these things have meaning only when they are viewed in a context whose other dimensions are Central Asia and the countries of the Persian Gulf.

What is happening to the balance of power in this vast geostrategic continuum? Afghanistan seems doomed to remain stuck fast in Soviet hands for some time to come. With each passing day the Occupation forces are driving the armed resistance further back, and exterminating or expelling the civilian population. In December 1979 Afghanistan had a population of some 13 or 14 million; in December 1986 the numbers had fallen to about 8 million. The difference is explained by some hundreds of thousands of people killed, and millions driven into foreign exile. A transmission error recently garbled a news dispatch, and started the rumour that Soviet troops were "withdrawing" from Afghanistan. On a closer look, it turns out that it is actually the Afghan population which is on the way out.

WITH THIS STRONGHOLD in the centre of the continent, the USSR extends its common frontier with Iran and overlooks

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Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. This proximity gives the leverage to exploit, and perhaps to foment, the impending changes in Tehran, as well as the new imbalances which will arise out of the end of the war between Iraq and Iran. As for the Gulf States, some French politicians have been heard to say that France should avoid incriminating Assad . . . in order not to alienate the moderate Arab countries. Yet these countries are terrified by the Assads, Khomeinis, and Gadaffis (as are the moderate African nations by the latter); and, far from encouraging our restraint, they count it against us that we do not protect them against their neighbours' plots.

Why? We have only to consult the shade of Anwar el-Sadat for the answer. If we continue to act on the basis of bizarre analyses, seasoned with trivial pomposities about the pan-Islamic future, we may put an end to France's "historic role" even as a secondary power. And the role of America's great power became equally pitiful after the Iranian blunder—as Egypt and Jordan, "moderate Arab nations" *par excellence*, have made abundantly clear.

The Western leaders have lost their heads over terrorism. It has forced them into error, pinned them back against the contradictions in their words and the catastrophes inherent in their actions. That was the objective: it is terrorism's greatest victory.

Famine, & the School for Dictators

YOU ARE THE HEAD of a totalitarian Third World country. You need money and various supplies so as to finance your military machine, and to protect and deepen "the Revolution". Your totalitarian allies are not generous. Your credit with the capitalist nations is at rock-bottom. What do you do?

Evidently, you wait for a good famine to come along, as it is bound to do, given the debilitating effect of your agricultural policy and while the heavens do their share by withholding rain. Three parts Afro-socialism and one part sub-Saharan drought will do the trick. When famine has a good hold, you begin by concealing it from the rest of the world for a year or two, which is all the easier to achieve because you already control all movements of foreign nationals on your territory. You let it grow, spread, and explode until it reaches the necessary scale and horror to appal international opinion.

At this point you play your ace. You offer a scoop to a foreign television team, and it films a bunch of those starving children that you have carefully accumulated. Broadcast at peak viewing-time by some BBC or CBS, the report plunges the bourgeois-capitalist TV audience into horrified compassion. Two days later it has covered every screen on the planet. At the same time—and this is an essential ingredient of the build-up—you vehemently accuse the capitalist governments of having deliberately refused or delayed giving aid, because they did not want to help a "progressive" country. This accusation is immediately taken up and orchestrated by Left-wing organisations in the democratic nations and by the liberal Churches. Overnight, the governments of the West find themselves metamorphosed into the real culprits of the famine that you caused and then exacerbated. Money and donations, public and private, come flooding in from all over the world.

Now comes the next stage of the operation. Here the key is to avoid the aid reaching the starving. You need it too badly for yourself, for your Army and your *nomenklatura*, to pay off some of your debts to your *pays frères*, and above all to speed up collectivisation and the revolution, eliminate your opponents, and consolidate your power. The trucks donated to distribute cereals will come in useful for transporting your soldiers, or better still for moving the peasantry to collective farm regions where they will die off, far from the curious gaze. Excessively nosy visitors likely to tell tales to the outside world (usually members of non-governmental organisations, doctors and other hot-heads) you neutralise by accusing them of having embezzled the aid themselves. Call them thieves, or even spies. As your slanders against these witnesses will be swallowed whole by the "Third Worlders" of their own country, all you have to do is subject them, by expelling them, to the tender mercies of their virtuous fellow-countrymen.

AFTER THAT, having made a fortune on the backs of one million two hundred thousand Ethiopians dead of starvation, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam—for obviously his are the feats I have been describing—had nothing further to do except reap the applause of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Socialist International, the Liberation Theologians, and the World Council of Churches. In 1973, Emperor Haile Selassie lost his throne after a famine which took 200,000 victims. The progress achieved in the meantime demonstrates the superiority of socialism over feudalism.

ANDRÉ GLUCKSMANN'S and Thierry Wolton's *Silence, on tue*,[1] unassailable in its documentation, irrefutable in its arguments, and implacable in its tone, may perhaps force the hypocrites to turn their eyes in the direction of the facts. The book is all the more instructive because Colonel Mengistu (as the authors show) has confined himself to repeating a formula devised by Lenin at the time of the great famine of 1921 in the Soviet Union, and frequently repeated since then (in particular in Cambodia, by the Hanoi régime, after its invasion of the country in 1979).

We are sickened by the way the crimes of the Addis Ababa dictatorship have been ignored by the international charity

[1] *Silence, on tue*. By ANDRÉ GLUCKSMANN and THIERRY WOLTON. Grasset.

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organisations, the officials of the United Nations (which will come as a surprise to no one), and the European Community. The cry of indignation raised by the doctors of *Médecins sans frontières* brought down in France more insults on their heads than any received by the people responsible for the extermination.

Two inhibitions have combined to give rise to the conspiracy of silence shared by the naive and credulous, the "useful idiots", and various cynical accomplices. First, the ancient and familiar fear of looking like a reactionary by criticising a "progressive" totalitarian régime; second, the fear of sounding "racist" by condemning the massacre of Africans by other Africans. Glucksmann and Wolton find the moral courage to put, at long last, the sacrilegious question: Why does a crime against humanity cease to be a crime against humanity when it is Blacks who are killing other Blacks?

THE MISAPPROPRIATION of humanitarian aid by despotic States, to the detriment of the populations they oppress, is happening on a world-wide scale. A French doctor, Jean-Christophe Rufin, has observed this colossal racket on several continents, and does not hesitate to speak of a "humanitarian trap". I found it an affecting experience to read *Le piège*,[2] which is an inventory of "useful disasters", sometimes even imaginary disasters based on cleverly fostered rumours, but no less profitable for that.

M. Rufin tells of the methods practised by governments or political parties in their quest to acquire or to reinforce control over the masses, and how they step in between the humanitarian organisations and the people, and intercept aid for their own ends. He cites the example of the Sandinistas after the fall of Somoza, who—in order to get rid of the other political parties and obtain a monopoly of power without holding proper elections—sometimes resorted to the most brutal tactics for laying their hands on international aid, and American aid in particular (Rufin reminds us that for the first two years of its existence the United States aided the new Nicaragua). In spite of aid, poverty in Nicaragua began "after" the consolidation of the Sandinista dictatorship.

Thus totalitarianism enlarges its empire thanks to finance provided by the democracies. For totalitarianism, starvation is truly "*le capital le plus précieux*".

If the hell of Ethiopia has enjoyed a near-universal indulgence and a blanket of silence, it is because of what these authors call "*immunité révolutionnaire*". But even those rare spirits who are not paralysed by it, and who have been ready to face the facts, do not know what conclusion to draw, or else they draw a contradictory conclusion. Like Bob Geldof, the naive and generous rock star whose concerts, staged "for the starving people of Ethiopia", collected millions of pounds which the military clique in Addis Ababa syphoned off into the purposes of the régime. Geldof is reported to be sickened and disillusioned; he knows about the forced transfers of populations which merely finish off the dying. But he considers that aid must still continue, at all costs. "I would have done the same even at Auschwitz!" he snaps. But if it meant subsidising the gas chambers. . . ?

J.-F. R.

[2] *Le piège*. By JEAN-CHRISTOPHE RUFIN. Editions Lattès.

"Scandal"

London

BRITAIN *has given £800,000 towards an Ethiopian refugee settlement operation described by opponents of the Addis Ababa Goverment as a "scandal". An investigation has been ordered by Mr Harold Walker, Ambassador to Addis, and Mr David Tatham, the envoy responsible for Djibouti, which is likely to raise fresh questions over Britain's policy on relief aid for Ethiopia.*

British Government help for Ethiopian refugees and drought victims during the last two years has totalled £56 million, apart from £60 million given privately in Britain. Yet more than 70,000 people are alleged by Ethiopian opposition groups to have died from malnutrition or disease as a result of forcible resettlement.

IN THE LATEST **operation, 15,000 refugees, mainly Afars who fled from Ethiopia across the border into Djibouti, are being returned; they committed a criminal offence leaving Ethiopia without permission. The possible penalties range from five years' imprisonment to death.**

The first party of about 550 is said to have been forced into railway trucks and taken to the Ethiopian frontier. Six were found to have suffocated and were buried at Dawale, just inside the Ethiopian border. About 200 others had to be given medical treatment because of the conditions on the train before 220 passengers were detained at Dire Dawa.

Britain contributed £550,000 worth of equipment to drill for water at a reception camp being prepared for the refugees in the Dire Dawa area.

WHITEHALL OFFICIALS *commented that the British aid was channelled through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees which was trying to screen the refugees, so that political fugitives were not handed back to Ethiopia.*

Foreign Office policy has been to direct aid to Ethiopia through relief agencies in an effort to ensure that it reached victims of famine, drought, and disease for whom it was intended. But Whitehall has been worried by frequent reports that relief food has fallen into hands of the Ethiopian Army and funds diverted by Ethiopian officials.

Colonel Mengistu, the Marxist leader, has made clear that he wants British endorsement for his resettlement programmes. Many thousands have been forced to leave their villages and towns in areas where there is strong political opposition or guerrilla rebellion against Colonel Mengistu, and transported to other regions.

Norman Kirkham
in the SUNDAY TIMES (*London*)

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The C. S. Lewises

Notes on Joy

By John Christopher

DURING THE last winter of the War I read C. S. Lewis's *Perelandra*, and wrote a (necessarily) callow letter to the author. It was partly appreciative, partly critical. I took issue with the depiction of the scientist, Weston, as unequivocally evil, a judgment which struck me as an unjustified slur on scienticians like my (then young) friend Arthur Clarke, whose compass was beyond my reach but not my admiration. In due course I had a reply from the author. It read:

Dear Sir,
There may be something in what you say.
Yours sincerely,
C. S. Lewis

Some years later, in a pub in Fetter Lane where the science-fiction folk gathered on Thursday evenings, I mentioned the incident to Joy Gresham (née Davidman). She was amused. It was, she said, a stock reply C. S. Lewis offered to men who wrote him controversial letters. Had I been a woman writing, he would not have been so curtly dismissive.

She spoke with authority, since her own acquaintance with the man she was eventually to marry had begun with a similar letter of comment on one of his books. She was, she realised, not alone in having been granted the privilege of a correspondence which had distinctly sexual undertones. (She knew about that other lady, also American, who was so carried away as to arrange to have the banns read in Oxford for her marriage with Lewis.)

There were several differences between Joy and those others with whom Lewis flirted by letter. She was almost certainly more intelligent than most if not all of her rivals. Her mind, Lewis wrote, "was lithe and quick and muscular as a leopard", and anyone who knew her well would recognise the validity of the simile. She was also probably more determined than the rest—apart, possibly, from the lady of the banns. Finally, of course, there was that strange and sure determinant: chance. She gained her end at fatal cost to herself.

I met C. S. Lewis twice, briefly, and had two letters from him. My second letter was to congratulate him on the Narnia books; and, mindful of his response to the first, I omitted my address. He wrote back to me care of the Globe in Hatton Garden, to which the science-fiction group had moved, and I remember the opening line: "What a fine Elizabethan thing it is, to address a man at his tavern. . . ." The fact that Joy was by then living in Oxford at his home, The Kilns, almost certainly accounts for the difference in response.

Joy, on the other hand, I knew quite well—we drank pints of bitter together and argued endlessly through a long succession of Thursday evenings—and I heard a part of their story from her point of view. It seems worth while putting some of it down before the views contributed by Lewis's friends and acquaintances take on the rigidity of literary history. There can be no doubt that she was resented in his circle as an interloper and the destroyer of a happy brotherhood. All male-female relationships are destructive of male bondings, and the deeper and pleasanter the bonding the greater the sense of outrage and betrayal. It is not surprising that misunderstandings and errors have been perpetuated. I found it disconcerting, for instance, to watch the highly-praised television play, *Shadowlands*,[1] which was based on their love affair. It struck me as misleading, and in places positively inaccurate.

Joy was Jewish and a New Yorker: highly intelligent, abrasive, earthy. She had been a prominent Communist, and had converted to a free-wheeling but orthodox-oriented Christianity as a result of reading Lewis's apologetics. She happened to do this during the McCarthy period, suffered (I was never sure how gladly) a good deal of media exposure, and as a result earned a lot of Left-wing obloquy. Her mental attitude combined hard logic with wide-ranging imaginativeness. She had been a Dianetics counsellor in the early days, before that interesting exercise in parapsychology crystallised into the fanatical and lucrative form of Scientology. Despite her new Christian conviction, she retained a strong Jewish identity. I remember her in an argument quoting *Matthew* 5:17: "Think not I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till heaven and earth

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C. S. LEWIS *(1898-1963), Tutor at Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1925-54, was from 1954 Professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at the University of Cambridge. His wife,* JOY DAVIDMAN, *taught English in New York high schools from 1935-38, after taking a BA at Hunter College, New York, and an MA at Columbia University. In 1938 she won the Yale Series of Younger Poets award and the Russell Loines Award of the National Institute of Arts and Sciences. Her works include a volume of poems, "Letters to a Comrade", and two novels, "Anya" and "Weeping Bay".*

JOHN CHRISTOPHER *(b. 1922) is the author of various speculative fantasies for adults, including "The Death of Grass" (Michael Joseph, 1956; Sphere, 1978); and of similar children's books, including the Tripods, Sword, and Fireball trilogies and "The Guardians". He is a winner of a Christopher Award (1970), the Guardian Award (1971), and the Jugendbuchpreis (1976).*

[1] William Nicholson's *Shadowlands* (1985; BBC TV in association with Gateway Films, the Episcopalian Radio-TV Foundation, Lella Productions and E.O. TV) was produced by David M. Thompson and directed by Norman Stone. It was the winner of the Best TV Drama Award (International Emmy) of the US National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in 1986.

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pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

The difficulties in the USA may have partly motivated her first visit to England, one summer in the early 1950s. She came alone, leaving her husband and two young sons in the care of a cousin. I am sure a more important motive was the hope of seeing Lewis, and I imagine she did so, though she did not speak of it:[2] her special interest in Lewis was not known to me until her second visit, a year later.

I was very glad to see her again but, still callow, was alarmed when she revealed that it was a passionate attachment to someone on this side of the Atlantic which had brought her back. She was immediately aware of my misapprehension and embarrassment; and, perhaps because of that, explained that she was deeply in love with Lewis, though without hope that it could come to anything.

When *Shadowlands* was first broadcast, someone whose name I forget but who plainly had been a friend or acquaintance of Lewis stated in a contribution to the *Radio Times* that, by the time the two met, Joy, although some years younger, was "no longer physically attractive". Belittling the opposition is a common enough human failing, but that was particularly ridiculous. Joy was a very attractive woman—her photograph on the dust-jacket of her book *Smoke on the Mountain*[3] is in no way misleading—and remained so even after she had been crippled by cancer.

She brought her two sons to England with her on the second visit. She was married to the American writer, William Lindsay Gresham, who mostly wrote on such subjects as legerdemain and fairground life.[4] On returning to America Joy had learned that Gresham was involved in a serious affair, and decided that a marriage already on the rocks was better abandoned. She did not deny that her own one-sided involvement with Lewis had contributed to this.

She remained based in London, with her sons, for some time, though she was by now seeing Lewis fairly regularly. (*Shadowlands* has her in Oxford and also, perhaps justifiably from the point of view of dramatic structure, skips the first trip and has her bringing the boys to England at the outset.) She still felt she had no grounds to hope for anything more than friendship from Lewis, and during this time had at least one brief affair, with a man she met at the Globe (not one of our regulars). She spoke of it to me frankly as something pleasant and unimportant. She liked the man and he had been good to the boys: he had a car, a less common possession then than now, and had taken them out and about. I know nothing of her financial situation at the time, except that she was certainly not affluent. But the fact that the affair took place is evidence not only that her romanticism was underpinned by realism, but also that at that stage she saw no hope of achieving her true desire. Given the smallest encouragement, she would have been, and I am sure later was, ferociously loyal to Lewis.

Then luck turned her way, though presumably motivation and persistence played their parts. She was engaged by Lewis as a housekeeper.[5] The undisclosed reason, she told me, was that Lewis's brother, who lived with him, was an alcoholic who had reached the stage of needing fairly continuous care and attention.

Joy came back to the Globe a couple of times while she was Lewis's housekeeper. She spoke of him then in a different way, as fondly but with a confidence that was new. It was plain that she knew she had engaged his interest as a woman. She told me, with a smile, that a mutual acquaintance had passed on to her a remark made to him by Lewis: that he was deeply attracted by her but, having practised Christian celibacy for a quarter-of-a-century, was at a loss how to come to terms again with physical desire. I had no doubt that she felt, and with justification, that she was capable of putting things right in that respect.

THE NEXT NEWS I had was not from her but through a newspaper story, which revealed that she was desperately ill, and that she and Lewis had been married: a death-bed ceremony was implied. I now have no positive recollection whether subsequent information came through correspondence or was gleaned during our last meeting, at The Kilns.

By a curious accident, having recently taken charge of the Industrial Diamond Information Bureau of the Diamond Corporation, I was invited to a Diamond Conference at Oxford. This involved attending technical and scientific lectures on diamonds, which left me quite out of my depth. I had been hired originally as a sub-editor for my boss's idiosyncratic refugee English, and had skated more or less successfully over perilous ice during the year between his first stroke and his death—the only people qualified to pass judgment were eight thousand miles away, in Johannesburg. It seemed tempting to escape for a couple of hours. I telephoned the Lewises, and was asked to tea.

The atmosphere was extraordinary; I had never been in the presence of two people sharing a gladness so pervasive as to seem almost palpable. This despite the fact that Joy was confined to bed, with a leg wired up to the ceiling, and Lewis had spinal deterioration which obliged him to take long seconds to prise himself out of a chair, or descend into one. It so impressed me that I wrote of it to a mutual acquaintance, who to my horror passed the story back to Joy. She mentioned this, amused, in her reply to my bread-and-butter letter.

Although uplifting, the atmosphere was in no way febrile or pious. It was, on the contrary, extremely light and good-

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[2] Anne Arnott, in *The Secret Country of C. S. Lewis* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1974) is incorrect in saying that Joy visited Lewis with her husband, William Lindsay Gresham.

[3] Joy Davidman, *Smoke on the Mountain: An Interpretation of the Ten Commandments* (Westminster Press, 1953). It was dedicated to C. S. Lewis.

[4] Gresham's biography of Houdini was published by Holt, Rinehart in 1959. His interest in séance-room trickery was shared by Joy (and I suspect she passed it on to Lewis—in *A Grief Observed* he mentions that she had warned him against mediums). His best-known book, *Monster Midway: An Uninhibited Look at the Glittering World of the Carny*, was brought out in the US by Rinehart in 1953, and in Britain the following year by Victor Gollancz.

[5] Anne Arnott is again in error in suggesting that her work was secretarial.

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humoured. The only recollection of Lewis I brought from it was a joke he told, apropos my being lodged at Brasenose College for the conference. I had marvelled at the plethora of games-notices on the bulletin board, and he told us of a film, shown in Oxford in the 1930s, in which someone had described an ideal character as having a background of Eton and King's, or Winchester and New College. To which a voice from the back row added: "Or Whipsnade and BNC."

I think it was that afternoon, perhaps while Lewis was away making tea, that Joy filled in the bits of her story I had missed. The cancer, to start with. While still living in the USA she had found a lump in her breast and, being intelligent, practical, and not prone to self-deception, had gone to a doctor. He told her there was nothing to worry about; because of its position the lump must be benign. Not entirely satisfied, she sought another opinion, and was told much the same. On coming to England for her second visit, she went to a man in Harley Street, with a similar result.

After moving into Lewis's home she had some pain in her hip, which she did her best to disregard. Then one night she was engaged in the prosaic procedure of opening a window to let out the cat when she slipped and fell. Her hip shattered, having been deeply invaded by secondary cancer arising from the primary undiagnosed cancer in the breast.

It does seem difficult to believe that even in the early '50s three separate doctors, at least one a specialist, should have failed to refer a patient for biopsy, even with a lump "in the wrong place". I record what she told me, and have no reason to think her a liar. And why should she invent it?

There is something else in which her testimony is at variance with what looks like becoming a received view. Much is made in *Shadowlands* of a secret marriage preceding the marriage in hospital. Joy never mentioned that to me. She would certainly not have been disloyal to Lewis, or embarrassed him in any way; but by this time their marriage was public, so that does not seem relevant. And the version in *Shadowlands* conflicts with something she *did* tell me. Lewis's proposal of marriage, at a time when she was not expected to survive, had been prompted by her receiving a letter, while in hospital, from her ex-husband. The letter was a brutal one, and included the observation that when she died he was going to take the boys back to America. If she was already legally married to Lewis, this would have been an empty threat.

Lewis married her, she told me, only to be sure of obtaining guardianship of her sons, and so easing the agony of a woman who was dying, and of whom he was extremely fond. There can be no doubt that the fondness very quickly turned into a deep and rewarding love. Apart from my own experience of their mutual happiness, Lewis's *A Grief Observed*[6] is a more than an adequate testimony.

Except for a few letters, I was not in touch with Joy during the remainder of her life. (I have an idea that my criticism of her husband for using the word "creature" pejoratively, in describing an income-tax official, may have had something to do with that.) I do recall, though, her ecstasies over the landscape of Ulster, which he took delight in showing her, and her amazement at the amount of money *The Saturday Evening Post* was prepared to pay Lewis for "Screwtape Proposes a Toast".[7] Then she wrote mentioning that a shadow was back on the X-ray photographs. I replied as encouragingly as I could, but had no answer.

So to *Shadowlands* again. Joss Ackland, I thought, made a surprisingly good job of Lewis, but Claire Bloom, although impressive in her way, was nothing like the Joy I knew. (Perhaps those who knew Joy slightly and Lewis well might reverse those judgments.) But something which offended me more deeply was the final scene in which Joy dies, screaming in agony. Oxford is probably the best place in England for first-class medical attention, and the wife of a don is unlikely to receive any but the highest quality of care. Lewis would have made sure no effort was spared to ease the death throes of his beloved. I did not find this episode easy to accept.

I believe I read that this version of her death came from Lewis's brother. He was advanced in alcoholism by the time that Joy joined their household and, I would think, not the most reliable of witnesses. Perhaps, in his sad and confused later days, it may have seemed an appropriate end for the woman who stormed into that cosy bachelor household and subjugated the beloved brother. (In fact, according to Anne Arnott, Joy did not die at home, but in hospital.)

The story of her extremity of pain also conflicts with the account given in *A Grief Observed*, that starkly honest history of death and bereavement. "How long, how tranquilly how nourishingly we talked together that last night!", Lewis wrote. And there is the bitter final passage:

> "She said not to me but to the chaplain, 'I am at peace with God.' She smiled, but not at me. *Poi si tornò all' eterna fontana.*"

That was where the pain was—in Lewis's mind and heart. Not a physical pain, but the very human one of jealousy: jealousy of the God he had so long served and expounded to the world, and briefly came to hate. Apart from wanting to believe her end was peaceful, I find this version altogether sadder and more moving.

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[6] C. S. Lewis (under the pseudonym N. W. Clerk), *A Grief Observed* (Faber, 1961; and since then reprinted in many editions).

[7] "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" was first published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, 19 December 1959; it was reprinted in *The Screwtape Letters and Screwtape Proposes a Toast* (Geoffrey Bles, 1961).

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Biography & Memoirs

On Raymond Aron

Spokesman for an Age—By VERNON BOGDANOR

HOW DOES ONE WRITE the biography of a man whose life was spent thinking and writing? How is one to portray the life of the mind? Intellectual biography is an inherently difficult art, and one that few have attempted successfully; and the difficulties multiply tenfold when the subject is Raymond Aron, author of seminal works on political philosophy, government, sociology, international relations and military strategy, and a profound and influential commentator on French and world politics for over half a century.[1] For one would have to be an authority on each of these subjects if one were to do full justice to him. Only another Aron, one is tempted to say, could do it. And indeed Aron, shortly before his death, published his magnificent *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique* (Julliard, 1983), an account of the evolution of his thought so lucid and magisterial that it would be difficult to surpass it.

What is needed now is something rather different—a systematic attempt to evaluate Aron's work, to distinguish what is of permanent value from the merely ephemeral, and to place the whole corpus of his thought within the wider context of 20th-century social and political theory. Not surprisingly, it has proved hard to find someone with the intellectual appetite and stamina to undertake the task. Robert Colquhoun is a brave man to have stepped in where so many have feared to tread, and his massive two-volume study is the first book-length account of Aron's thought to have appeared in English.[2]

One cannot but respect the vast amount of work that has gone into Colquhoun's book, which is based upon a doctoral thesis submitted to the London School of Economics in 1982. But, alas, instead of analysing the fundamentals of Aron's thought, Colquhoun has made the mistake of attempting to be all-inclusive: he provides a summary of nearly everything that Aron ever wrote—from the great works to the tracts for the times. He also offers summaries of a large number of not very interesting reviews of Aron's books. The method is relentless, and the total effect deadening. Where a powerful seachlight was needed, Colquhoun offers an indiscriminate aerial view; in trying to cast light on everything, he succeeds in illuminating little. These two volumes are likely to prove a quarry rather than a classic, to be ransacked by grateful students seeking material for dissertations and essays. But Aron deserves better.

RAYMOND ARON was born, into an assimilated Jewish family, in Paris in 1905. After a brilliant student career at the École Normale Supérieure, he went in 1930 to Germany to study sociology and the philosophy of history. His motives, however, were not purely those of scholarship. Having been a Socialist, albeit for a brief period, in 1924 at the time of the *Cartel des Gauches*, he shared in the pacificistic illusions of his generation, and hoped to make a contribution to Franco-German reconciliation. The time which he spent in Germany between 1930 and 1933 was indeed to prove the formative period of his life, but not in the way he had expected. "Beginning in 1930", Aron was to comment over 30 years later in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France,

> "I felt, almost physically, the approach of historical storms. *History is again on the move*, in the words of Arnold Toynbee. I am still marked by this experience, which inclined me towards an active pessimism."

The rise of National Socialism quite undermined Aron's faith in the enlightened social philosophy then reigning in the French universities—whether the belief in science and progress of the latter-day Durkheimians, the idealism of the neo-Kantian Brunschvicg, or the individualism of Alain (the nearest the Third Republic ever had to an official philosopher). What was lacking in the French thought of his era, Aron concluded, was historical awareness, an

[1] Among some 600 periodical articles, Aron published over thirty articles for ENCOUNTER, which he regarded as "the best monthly magazine in English".

[2] *Raymond Aron. Vol. 1: The Philosopher in History, 1905-1955. Vol. 2: The Sociologist in Society, 1955-1983.* By ROBERT COLQUHOUN. Sage Publications, £30.00, $35.00.

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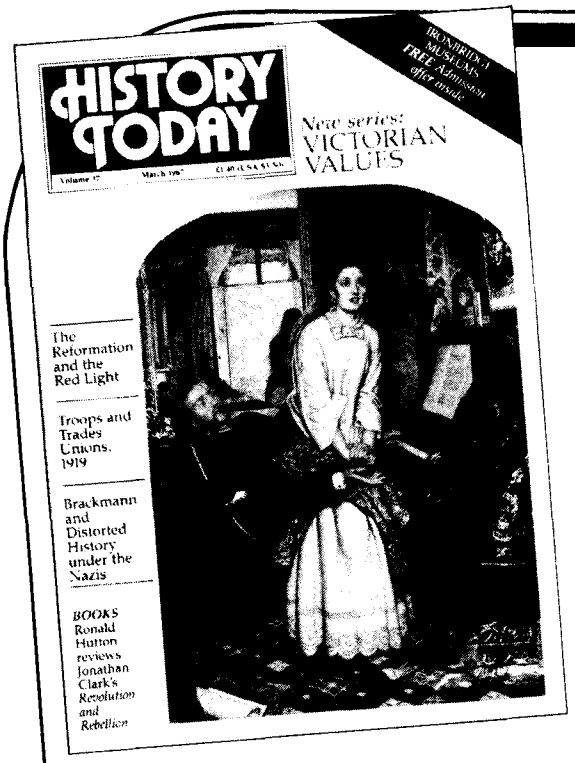
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understanding of the concrete differences between one society and another, between different national traditions, between different capitalist régimes. As a result, Aron's mentors could offer no explanation of "the revolts of the irrational", of National Socialism, which Aron could see gaining strength day by day.

> "The rise of National Socialism in pre-Hitler Germany and the revelation of politics in its diabolical essence forced me to argue against myself, against my intimate preferences; it inspired in me a sort of revolt against the instruction I had received at the university, against the spirituality of philosophers, and against the tendency of certain sociologists to misconstrue the impact of régimes with the pretext of focusing on permanent and deep realities. . . .
>
> I reproached the second generation of Durkheimians not so much for their socialism, which was hardly subversive, as for the serenity of their choice, their unshakable optimism, their indifference to Marx, and their tendency to neglect the sometimes inexpiable struggles between classes, parties and ideas. . . ."[3]

Léon Brunschvicg, Aron's teacher, had emphasised the elevated ideal of spiritual unity (he was, as Colquhoun says, "the contemporary of Einstein, not of Hitler"); while Alain, the philosopher of French radicalism, endorsed a view of democracy summed up by the title of one of his books, *Le Citoyen contre les Pouvoirs*, a philosophy of *incivisme*, of abstention from civic responsibility which, in an age of competing ideologies, could serve only to weaken the effectiveness and authority of democratic government.[4]

In Germany, however, Aron encountered not only Hitler, but also Marx, whose early philosophical writings were published in Berlin in 1932—and Max Weber who was always, for Aron, "*the* sociologist".[5] It was Weber who was to remain the dominant intellectual influence upon him, and this influence is particularly striking in Aron's political sociology, and, indeed, in his whole conception of politics. For Weber had resolutely set his face against any explanation of society, whether materialist or idealist, which claimed to be total. He had attacked the economic interpretation of history, but he did not seek to counter Marxism with an equally exaggerated idealist view of history. His argument in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5, Eng. trans. 1930) was that Protestantism favoured capitalism, not that it explained it. "Protestantism", paraphrased Aron, "is not *the* cause, but *one* of the causes of capitalism, or rather, it is *one* of the causes of certain aspects of capitalism."[6]

Weber believed in what Aron was to call (perhaps misleadingly) a probabilistic view of history—one which rejected any philosophy of history in the Hegelian sense, but understood historical development in terms of influences and tendencies. This, as Aron came to appreciate, was also the outlook that had inspired the founders of the French school of political sociology—Montesquieu and Tocqueville—and also the historian Élie Halévy, for whom Aron was always to feel a special kinship.[7] Paradoxically, German philosophy led Aron to discover that he had a deep affinity with the French school of liberal sociologists:

> "a school of sociologists who are not very dogmatic, who are above all interested in politics but who do not disregard the social infrastructure but recognise the autonomy of the political order, and who are liberals."[8]

Alexis de Tocqueville had defined democracy, not in terms of a particular political régime, but in sociological terms, as the movement towards equality of conditions, something incompatible with distinctions of estate or caste. Aron, however, was more inclined to analyse society through the structure of authority, through the political régime. For it was the nature of the political régime which was the fundamental though not the determining factor in shaping the life of society.

Modern societies, Aron thought, were essentially *industrial*, and based upon the division of labour, large-scale enterprise, and the accumulation of capital; but this was a less fundamental phenomenon so far as human relationships were concerned than the distribution of authority. Different societies at the same level of industrial development might be governed in quite different ways. Modern industrial societies "which have many features in common (such as distribution of manpower and growth of collective resources) are differentiated above all by the way public powers are organised, this organisation influencing many features of the economic system and its relations with other groups."[9]

Like Montesquieu and Tocqueville, then, Aron insisted upon both the primacy and also the autonomy of politics. For, although he held that the basic characteristics of any particular industrial society were dependent upon the political régime, he did not want to substitute a theory of political determinism for one of economic or social determinism. Just as it was mistaken to believe that society determined the political régime, so also it was equally mistaken to believe that the political régime determined society.

The outcome, rather, would depend upon a variety of factors—political culture, circumstances, and, not least, human actions. There was just as little reason to believe that

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[3] This passage and the one quoted above are taken from *De la Condition historique du sociologue* (1970), translated in *Politics and History: Selected Essays by Raymond Aron* (ed. M. B. Constant, Collier-Macmillan, 1978), p. 65.

[4] Chapter 1 of Philip M. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise: Politics in the Fourth Republic* (Doubleday, 1966) discusses the influence of Alain on French political attitudes.

[5] Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought* (Weidenfeld, 1968), vol. 2, p. 265.

[6] Raymond Aron, *German Sociology* (Heinemann, 1957), p. 95.

[7] See Aron's essay "Élie Halévy (1870-1937) and the Defence of Liberalism", in John A. Hall (ed.), *Rediscoveries* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

[8] Raymond Aron, *Main Currents of Sociological Thought* (Penguin, 1968), vol. 1, p. 258.

[9] Raymond Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* (Weidenfeld, 1968), p. 11.

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industrial societies were inherently democratic as that developing countries were inherently incapable of democracy. Indeed, Aron was a critic not only of Marxism, but of what Ernest Gellner has characterised as "a kind of inverted Marxism which consists fundamentally of a new kind of one-one correlation between economic base and political superstructure".[10]

In particular Aron remained highly sceptical of the view that economic growth in Communist societies would, of itself, induce liberalisation. He watched the "Prague spring" with sympathy, noting that Brezhnev resented the growth of intellectual freedom far more than Dubček's economic reforms. Similarly, he commented on *Solidarity* in 1980:

> "There is one thing we should not forget: the Soviets are more tolerant of private ownership of land than of freedom of expression."[11]

ARON'S PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION was bound to bring him into conflict with the French Left—with the Communist Party and its numerous fellow-travellers; and with his "*petit camarade*" from the École Normale Supérieure, Jean-Paul Sartre, who was to produce an uneasy synthesis of existentialism and Marxism. Aron had been one of the first to recognise the true nature of the régime of the Gulag. "If", said François Furet, the ex-Communist historian, "the French intelligentsia has ended up being one of the best inoculated against its temptations, who is more responsible than he? Solzhenitsyn broadened the furrow, but it is Aron who first ploughed it."[12]

Aron was also a critic of the democratic Left; he was sceptical of the prospects of the Popular Front in 1936, and regarded Léon Blum's economic programme as unrealistic and divisive; he was even more hostile to the *programme commun* of the 1970s. Just before the end of his life, he was still to insist, in highly controversial circumstances, that the danger to France arose from the democratic Left's flirtation with Communism, rather than from the *Front National*. It was, he declared, less serious for the Right to make tactical alliances with Le Pen than for Mitterrand to have accepted four Communists into his Cabinet in 1981:

> "In the 1930s, the danger came not from Jacques Doriot, but from Hitler. The only fascist-style international in the 1980s is red and not brown—which does not mean that Doriot was innocent yesterday any more than Le Pen today."[13]

But Aron, although more indulgent to the Right than the Left, was not himself a man of the Right; and the clericals and Gaullists knew that he was not. The Catholic Right saw him as a representative figure of the liberal Left; while the Gaullists, despite Aron's membership of the *Rassemblement du Peuple français*, sensed that he could not offer unconditional allegiance to any political leader. Nor could Aron, an Atlanticist and early advocate of Algerian independence, accept Gaullist foreign or colonial policy. "Aron has never been a Gaullist", de Gaulle was to tell Malraux in 1961. Aron nevertheless judged that a Gaullist régime in France, far from being Fascist or a threat to civil liberties, as many on the Left predicted, would evolve into the bureaucratic and conservative Fifth Republic that we have come to know.

WHY WAS ARON not a man of the Right? What kept him from it was essentially its conservatism: "Right-wing thought did not run the risk, like that of the Left, of degenerating into ideology or fanaticism, but of atrophying in nostalgic and sterile myth-making." The French Right was liberal in its attitude towards individual enterprise and competition, but at the same time hankered after a hierarchical and stable social order which was incompatible with human progress. Because they failed to comprehend social change, too many on the Right invented demons—whether Freemasons or Jews—in an attempt to exorcise what they could not understand.[14] For that element of the Right which was liberal, Aron had much sympathy. For illiberalism—whether clerical, Gaullist, or reactionary—he had none.

And yet it is perhaps misleading to seek to analyse Aron's position in terms of the sterile dichotomy between Left and Right, for Aron believed that this demarcation line, first drawn up at the time of the French Revolution, yielded, in the 20th century, a wrong alignment of political forces. It united those who ought to be separated—French Socialists and Communists; the liberals of the French Right with the conservatives and neo-fascists—while dividing those who ought to have been united in the defence of democracy. The 20th century, Aron maintained, had seen a double schism as Fascism and Communism had split both Right and Left.

The myth of the Right, however, had been destroyed by Hitler. After the Second World War, it was not possible to go on saying "Better Hitler than Blum" as, it was alleged, the French Right had done at the time of the Popular Front. The experience of Stalinism ought similarly to have destroyed the myth of the Left; but it had not, and the history of the *programme commun* of the 1970s showed that there were still too many socialists who persisted in seeing "no enemies on the Left". Yet the Popular Front had already shown that the idea of the unity of the Left was but a myth in Sorel's sense—a vague idea coming to be fixed in a striking form of words, and so capable of moving men and women to action. For the "real sentiments" of the French Communist leaders "towards

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[10] Ernest Gellner, "On Democracy in France", a review of Aron's *Essai sur les libertés*, *Government and Opposition* (1966), p. 258. Perhaps this is the right place to plead for an English edition of this work, a worthy rival to Mill's famous Essay, to be made available again.

[11] *L'Express*, 12 September 1980: cited in Robert Colquhoun, *Raymond Aron*, vol. 2, p. 559.

[12] François Furet, in *Le Nouvel observateur*, 2 September 1983, cited in Colquhoun, *Raymond Aron*, vol. 2, p. 585.

[13] Raymond Aron, in *L'Express*, 23 September 1983, cited in Colquhoun, *Raymond Aron*, vol. 2, p. 537.

[14] See Larry Siedentop's fine essay analysing French liberalism, "Two Liberal Traditions", in Alan Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin* (Oxford University Press, 1979).

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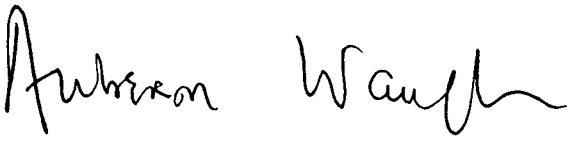

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their partners of the Popular Front were shown when the Vichy régime put the leader of the pre-War governments on trial, and prominent Communists wrote to Marshal Pétain offering to give evidence for their prosecution. *L'Humanité* protested when Vichy released Socialist leaders from jail, and even when they were treated as political prisoners instead of as ordinary criminals"; while "the first Communist reaction to the German entry into Paris was to apply to the occupation authorities for permission to publish *L'Humanité* legally."[15]

YET, IN FRANCE at least, the myth of the Left remained, to be resurrected in the "psychodrama" of 1968, and in 1981 with the advent to power of those whom Aron called the socialists of yesterday—"*les socialistes de grand-papa*". "Out of step and behind the times, France is advancing briskly towards the triumphant and inefficient social democracy that the British are striving to leave behind";[16] and Aron foresaw that, within a short time, Mitterrand would have to resort to the philosophy of austerity that had been practised by Raymond Barre—indeed, that he would have to be even more austere.

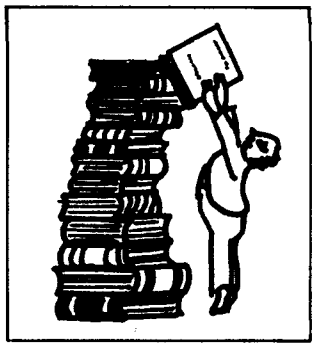
Aron regretted the "bipolar quadrille" of politics under the Fifth Republic in the 1970s, whereby Communists and Socialists lined up against Gaullists and Giscardians, so putting France's economic and social system at risk at each election. He had hoped that, as President, Giscard d'Estaing would "put an end to the exclusive possession of power by a group within the majority; and modify the rules or political practices which force France to play Russian roulette with its future every seven years"[17] by the introduction of proportional representation which would free the Socialists from the Communist Party, and enable French political life to develop along more normal channels. He did not live to see the *cohabitation* between a President of the Left and a Prime Minister of the Right which followed the 1986 legislative elections; but he would, surely, have welcomed it for the contribution which it could make to unfreezing traditional allegiances, and putting an end to "the exclusive possession of power", whether by Gaullists or by Socialists.

RAYMOND ARON REMAINS this century's leading exemplar of Alexis de Tocqueville's conception of history: a theorist of politics and society whose awareness of the concrete and the contingent saved him from the intellectual and moral *bêtises* committed by so many of his contemporaries. Overshadowed in his youth by the more glamorous and flamboyant intellectuals of St Germain des Prés, he was able to show, in the fullness of maturity, that he had a more profound understanding of his age than those who sought to refract it through the prism of ideology. We must be grateful to Robert Colquhoun for having reminded us just how massive Aron's achievement was; but the intellectual biography of this astonishing man still remains to be written.

[15] Philip M. Williams, *Crisis and Compromise*, p. 78-79.
[16] Raymond Aron, in *L'Express*, 24 June 1983, cited in Colquhoun, *Raymond Aron*, vol. 2, p. 570.
[17] Raymond Aron, in *Le Figaro*, 17 May 1974, cited in Colquhoun, *Raymond Aron*, vol. 2, p. 404.

Telling Tales

The Uses of Biography—By RICHARD MAYNE



"DON'T TRUST the teller—trust the tale." The dictum has resonance for post-structuralist critics; but it's proved a feeble breakwater against the tide of tittle-tattle. Where past generations read books, we read books about books, and especially books about authors. Is it vicarious vanity, sidling into the *persona* of some dead genius? Is it reluctance to allow art to challenge our imagination? Is it envy, consoling our own mediocrity with the thought that artists had unhappy childhoods, failed marriages, or early deaths? Is it curiosity, often prurient? So-and-so was a sexual athlete (vicarious vanity); so-and-so was impotent (consolation); someone else was ruined by drink. Since few biographers are themselves great writers, we risk nothing by going along for the ride. For the most part, all we face is life's parabola. We may feel pity, but hardly terror: if this is catharsis, it's a pretty mild purge.

I *think* that explains our appetite for biography rather than imaginative literature: but the diagnosis may be unjust. Stumbling through life as we do, trying to make sense of our own parabola, we certainly look for examples and cautionary tales. Curiosity can be a virtue if it's neither idle nor self-comforting. How nobler souls tackled, or feebler ones flunked, the challenges we all face: that may well be instructive. And when a biography deals with a figure from history, the personal can illuminate the public past. Historians may mistrust suggestions that events are moulded by great men and women: but, having worked with one or two, I suspect that their influence is at least as great as that

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of the "factors" and "forces"—or "class conflicts"—so often assumed to rule the political roost. What matters, in historical biography, is that the author should have a sense of proportion, and adequate knowledge of the factors and forces with which his subject had to deal.

Frank Barlow, Emeritus Professor of History in the University of Exeter, is finely endowed with both. His most recent works on Norman England brilliantly embellish scholarship with creative imagination; and his new biography of Thomas Becket is a masterpiece of judicious narrative.[1] Its only omission, so far as I could judge, was any reference to T. S. Eliot's masterly but misleading *Murder in the Cathedral* —an act of policy, I'm sure. What emerges does not greatly change the accepted story, but fleshes it out and corrects a number of errors, not only in the early hagiography, but also in one of the illuminated manuscript depictions of Thomas's death. Forty-two photogravure plates and several plans and diagrams add circumstance to the story, and its substance is buttressed by forty pages of notes.

The portrait that emerges is less flattering than the usual *image d'Epinal*. Thomas, Professor Barlow concludes, "was a glorious royal chancellor, but, it seems, in no way a creative or even an assiduous administrator. . . . His rule as archbishop can be viewed as disastrous for all concerned." The quarrel in which he died was healed by negotiation within ten years, and in terms which left the King continued power over the Church. Yet, at the same time, the Archbishop's intransigence brought to light—and to the Pope's notice—anomalies in English customs which his martyrdom helped to remove. Nothing in history ever turns out entirely as expected. Could it be added that no martyrdom is wholly in vain?

Such tangled conclusions are in the nature of the exercise. In the 12th century, "modern" biography is impossible. A few leading figures, like Thomas himself or Hildebrand, can just about be tackled: early lives, ecclesiastical documentation, relics, oral traditions retailed by chroniclers—all these can shed light on a personality through his actions and his fame. But in the end, biography melts into history, a general narrative pinned to an individual; and none the less illuminating for that.

How very different from the home life of our own dear Boswell. Gossip-biographer *par excellence*, he himself has been turned inside-out far more thoroughly than even he could manage with Dr Johnson. His artfully candid journals have long attracted a large and eager public—eager, that is, for more details of his dissolute sex-life in London and elsewhere. The present instalment, *Boswell: The English Experiment*,[2] takes up the story some twenty years after his first *London Journal*: it begins in 1785. By now, Boswell was in his mid-forties. His book on Corsica had made his name

[1] *Thomas Becket*. By Frank Barlow. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

[2] *Boswell: The English Experiment 1785-1789*. By Irma Lustig and Frederick Pottle. Heinemann, £30.00.

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seventeen years before, and he had just published his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.

Almost the first response was a furious, ill-written letter from Lord Macdonald, incensed at Boswell's having called him "a rapacious Highland chief". With great difficulty, Boswell staved off the threat of a duel. He then embarked on a precarious career at the English bar, with patronage from another noble monster, the Earl of Lonsdale. Meanwhile, his sad wife Margaret was dying of tuberculosis, while Boswell—ignoble monster—renewed his affair with the elegant adventuress Margaret Caroline Rudd, earlier acquitted of forgery and later imprisoned for debt. But the real interest of this volume is in the faltering start which Boswell made on his *Life of Johnson*. All writers can take courage from his determination . . . and his delays.

"We are *not* amused" is an irresistible bridge between Boswell and Queen Victoria: but the evidence suggests that she often was. "YOU CANNOT IMAGINE HOW DELIGHTFUL IT IS TO BE MARRIED", she wrote to Albert's cousin a few weeks after their wedding; and although everyone remembers her sorrowful widowhood, she did enjoy what Stanley Weintraub calls, in his new biography,[3] a "spirited post-Jubilee" phase. Director of the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies at Pennsylvania State University, Mr Weintraub has consulted many people and a number of archives, and brought to light some neglected facts. These include the illness from which Victoria nearly died, and seven attempts on her life by would-be assassins. The "60 glorious years" of popular legend and screenplay were more eventful than is often thought. Unfortunately, although impeccably researched, the book has only general references, and is written in a creamy, jaunty style which reads well but assorts ill with quoted Victorian English. No one could ask for pastiche in an historical biography: but there's something incongruous about sentences such as: "Her five-foot form was filled with paradoxes that she never reconciled."

GEORGE MACDONALD was a quintessential Victorian. A Congregationalist who ended in the Anglican Church, he became a prolific novelist to support his numerous family. A photograph in Kathy Triggs's *Portrait*[4] shows him in 1901, in heavy greatcoat and skullcap, with a Father Christmas beard and worried, intent eyes. Earlier, he had the rocky face of a visionary; and visionary he was. His first publications were essays, poems, and short stories. He also taught, becoming at thirty-five a Professor of English Literature at Bedford College, London. While there, coincidentally, he encouraged a clergyman friend of the family to seek a publisher for an unusual manuscript: it was *Alice's Adventures Underground*. At last, told by a publisher that "Nothing but fiction pays", MacDonald produced his first three-volume novel, *David Elginbrod*.

Today, this is likely to be remembered chiefly for the origin of its title, which was an epitaph a journalist friend had seen in Scotland:

> *Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde;*
> *Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;*
> *As I wad do, were I Lord God,*
> *An' ye war Martin Elginbrodde!*

The novel's plot (boy meets girl, leaves her, meets other woman, then realises he loves the girl) was flimsy. What appealed to its Victorian readers was the moral struggle—and the quasi-Dickensian contrast between mere intellect and true spiritual growth. Ruskin was one of many who admired the book's "noble things", including its reverence for Nature. Thereafter, MacDonald produced a stream of not dissimilar works, shot through with moral observations and concern for women and the poor. Why he now deserves a fresh biography is uncertain: of all his 58 books only two—both fairy-tales—are still in print. Mrs Triggs's brief life is briskly written, and contains most of the information any reader might want. Essentially, however, it remains a spy-hole on one minor facet of the Victorian literary world; and its chief virtue is to remind us how deeply the Victorians felt the emotions they expressed so patly. Here, the virtue of biography is its power to persuade us to be serious about the past.

THE ABILITY to stretch our sympathies, then, is a basic requirement of the biographer's craft. It's needed very powerfully when dealing with a man whose best endeavours, during much of his life, were exerted on shooting wild animals. Such a man was Jim Corbett, best known as the author of *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*. Born in the Himalayan foothills, he killed his first leopard at the age of ten; and he soon became a legendary hunter and raconteur. In his late forties, he gave up shooting normal tigers; and a decade later, in 1936, he helped to found India's first tiger reserve. The "man-eaters" he described and still shot were animals so old, infirm, or badly wounded that they could catch only human prey.

The novelist Martin Booth, author of *Hiroshima Joe*, has done his expert best to make Jim Corbett understandable, if not likeable, to more humane modern tastes.[5] Rightly, he makes much of Corbett's jungle skills, his command of languages, and the rather gung-ho milieu in which he grew up. There's no doubt, too, that tracking animals—if only to slaughter them—gives the hunter some rapport with them; and Corbett's later concern to preserve wildlife suggests that in his case it grew. But so long as the objective was to destroy fellow-creatures with high-speed bullets, man-beast rapport must have been rather limited. *Carpet Sahib* is less nauseous in this respect than some of Hemingway's African writings. It certainly shows that Corbett was skilful and brave. It also shows that he rather wrote up his exploits: yet, at the same time, he sometimes spared his quarry. Given his upbringing, he could have been far worse.

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[3] *Victoria: Biography of a Queen*. By STANLEY WEINTRAUB. Unwin Hyman, £17.50.

[4] *The Stars and the Stillness: A Portrait of George MacDonald*. By KATHY TRIGGS. Lutterworth Press, £11.95.

[5] *Carpet Sahib: A Life of Jim Corbett*. By MARTIN BOOTH. Constable, £12.95.

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The Worm Forgives the Plough was the title, perhaps optimistic, of John Stewart Collis's 1947 account of his early wartime life as a farm labourer. Despite Rugby and Oxford, Collis never lost his Irish accent, and never acquired much concern for physical comfort. He wrote as compulsively as Jim Corbett hunted; but until quite late in life he remained little known. In 1970, his autobiography helped spur a revival, and his last years were tranquil and sunny. It was during this period that Richard Ingrams, the former editor of *Private Eye*, came to know him; and the upshot is a charming memoir generously laced with quotations.[6] To anyone unfamiliar with Collis's best work, it's an apt introduction: to Collis's admirers, it's a treasure. Modest, amused, and discerning, it exemplifies another role of biography: to carve a monument to a much-loved friend.

Autobiography is perhaps a testament of friendship for oneself. Why else should a thrifty novelist squander so many useful memories? But some writers are so prodigal with their material that it seems a cornucopia or a bottomless well. Anthony Burgess is a prime example: it's been no surprise to discover, over the years, that he too has Irish blood. The list of his publications is daunting, even to a reader. Competitors must quail. Yet, personally, I've often felt that his work's edges are unduly rough-hewn. Reading *Little Wilson and Big God*,[7] the first part of what he calls his "Confessions", I began to see why. The cornucopia flows too fast to be finicky: the energy bubbles out like blood from a severed artery or water from a broken main.

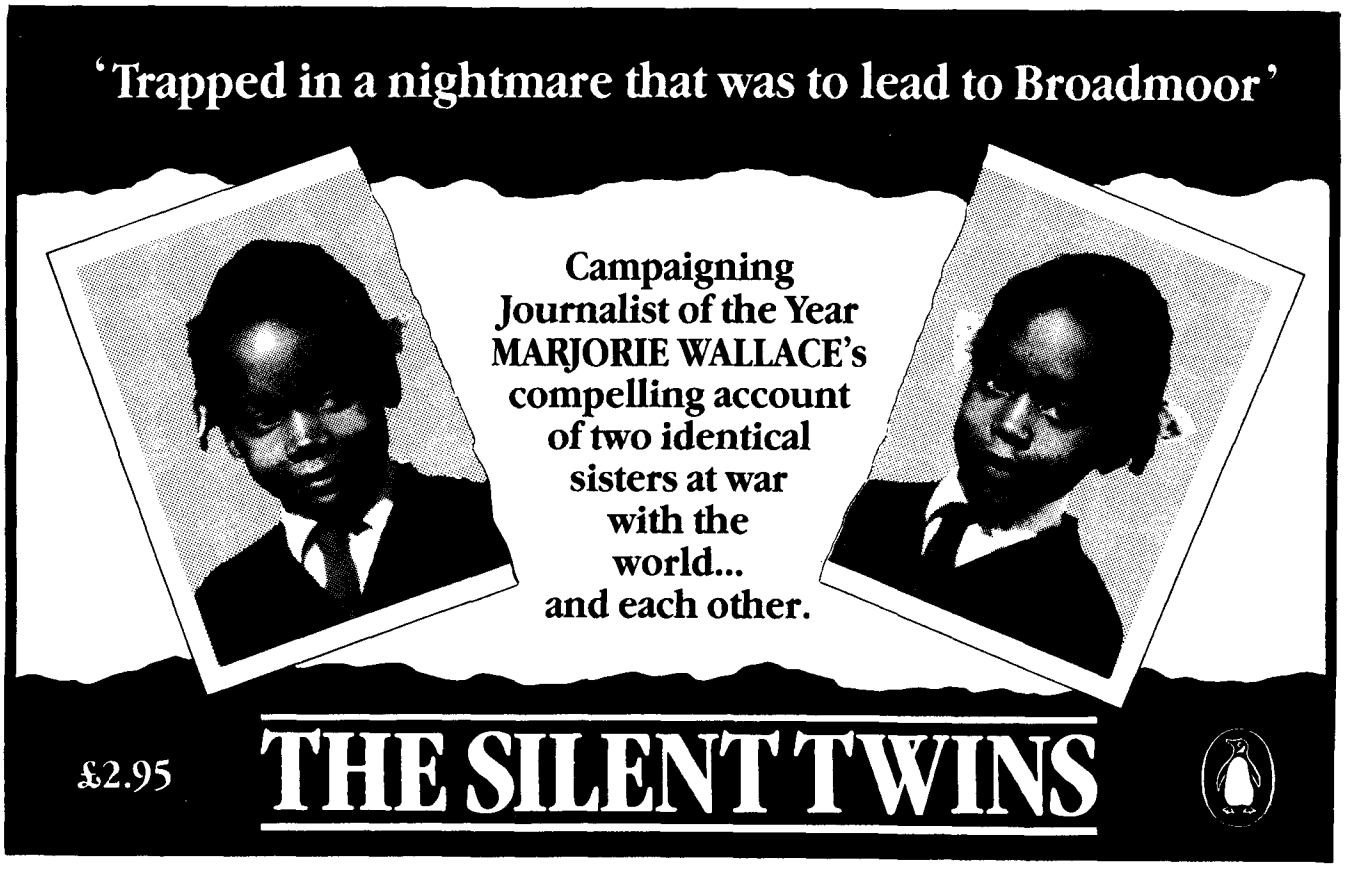
"Wilson" is the surname on Burgess's passport. His first given name was "John"; the second "Burgess", maiden name of the mother he never knew. Thus christened, he was confirmed as "Anthony". A cradle Catholic, he was brought up in Manchester, not always in salubrious homes. Much of his adolescence was a sweaty struggle between his conscience and sex—an earlier, North-Country version of David Lodge's *How Far Can You Go?* "All the way" was the frequent answer; and the ensuing torments weren't ended by marriage. Burgess's first wife, Lynne, favoured "free love" and liquor: so, eventually, did he. All this comes tumbling out with disconcerting frankness, as from a latter-day Boswell's journal; but more engaging are the serio-comic episodes of life in the Army and as an Education Officer in the Far East. Here, the presiding genius might be Evelyn Waugh—though Waugh's cold-steel prose would have sharpened both the absurdity and the pain. No: self-love is not the spur of autobiography. Call it rather the confessional—with the priest racked by laughter and tears.

[6] *John Stewart Collis: A Memoir.* By RICHARD INGRAMS. Chatto & Windus, £10.95.

[7] *Little Wilson and Big God.* By ANTHONY BURGESS. Heinemann, £12.95.

[8] *Ike: The Life and Times of Dwight D. Eisenhower.* By PIERS BRENDON. Secker & Warburg, £12.95.

MY LAST THREE LIVES (as a cat might remark) are political. So, one might add, are the purposes of two of them. Piers Brendon's *Ike*[8] is a re-revisionist account of Eisenhower: not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the golfing idler lampooned by his critics in the 1950s, nor the assiduous politico promoted by more recent scholarship. Rather, Brendon's portrait is that of paradox and vacillation. He sees his subject as shrewd, warm-hearted, idealistic, and loyal—yet weak-willed, selfish, petty, and sometimes cold. My own small personal knowledge suggests a kinder picture. But the Brendon version may prove a trenchant catalyst in the current debate over Eisenhower's place in history: biography as manifesto, so to speak.

The dust-jacket of A. M. Sperber's life of Ed Murrow[9] shows him smoking one of the cigarettes that killed him. It looks cruel now. The book is far from cruel, however: in essence, it's an admiring chronicle of a very full reporting life. In the long run, Murrow may well be remembered for two things. One was his husky voice from wartime London, reporting the Blitz. The other was his role in exposing Joseph McCarthy—some would say when the tide was already turning, others when the time was ripe. But Murrow's busy career held much more than that. He reported on the Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria; he went on bombing raids; he graphically described Belsen. He might have become Director-General of the BBC. He would have had a longer career in American television if he had not denounced its commercial triviality. His biography brings back to vivid life a key period in the growth of the mass media: the heyday of radio and the early years of TV. On both, Ed Murrow was a master. He earned the broadcast reporter's ideal epitaph: *He shot off his mouth.*

King Remembered, by Flip Schulke and Penelope McPhee,[10] also celebrates a folk hero—Martin Luther King. Described as "a biography, a photo essay, and a tribute", it contains countless news photographs. Together with the authors' plain and uncritical prose, they have the slightly dulled impact of a good propaganda film. Good, because hagiography is appropriate in dealing with an eloquent martyr; but propaganda, because so little of the hero's complex self is allowed to show. During his lifetime and afterwards, his opponents accused him of vanity and even philandering. I'd like to know if there was truth in the charges; but this book leaves me in the dark.

What it does, on the other hand, is what it sets out to do: pay a moving tribute to a man who died in a just cause still not fully won. As the authors characteristically put it, spoiling a good line with a scrupulous afterthought, "Martin King's dream is still a dream deferred in many ways." Their real purpose, in this biography, is not to console, or titillate, or admonish, or even to pay tribute. All they want—all!—is to fulfil the dream.

[9] *Murrow: His Life and Times.* By A. M. Sperber. Michael Joseph, £17.95.

[10] *King Remembered.* By Flip Schulke and Penelope O. McPhee. Norton, £16.00, $22.50.

A Feast of Humanity

Politics & Personalities—By Anthony Hartley

The political biography is a peculiarly British institution. The tradition by which the families of prominent political figures turn over their papers for use in an "official" biography is of great benefit to history and, usually, to the reputation of the politicians themselves, whose faltering policies and lack of success are often atoned for by sympathetic private characteristics and insights into the problems of the day contained in letters or diaries. Biography makes for pleasant reading and a painless initiation into history. There is nothing better than to sit back with a book like Monypenny and Buckle on Disraeli or Trevelyan on Bright and let British political life sink into you. The best are those which give the most quotations from papers or speeches, but satisfaction is dependent on the biographer having a good prose style, psychological understanding, and a knowledge of the world.

Perhaps the seeming lack of really satisfactory American political biographies is due to the ponderous handling such works receive from the academics who produce them, but who are not necessarily members of political society. As for France, the genre has met an apparently insurmountable obstacle in the reluctance of French families to give biographers access to papers—a reluctance which seems to rest on the conviction that something disreputable is bound to come out of it all. Thus there is no authoritative biography of, for instance, either Poincaré or Briand. Political biographies remain a British achievement which we should cherish—in the first place, by buying them.

Robert Rhodes James is an elegant writer and an experienced historian, and in Anthony Eden he has a fascinating subject.[1] But this biography, despite its use of Eden's papers, leaves the reader with the impression of an unsolved mystery. There are undertones of bitterness in it, and the reversal

[1] *Anthony Eden.* By Robert Rhodes James. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.95.

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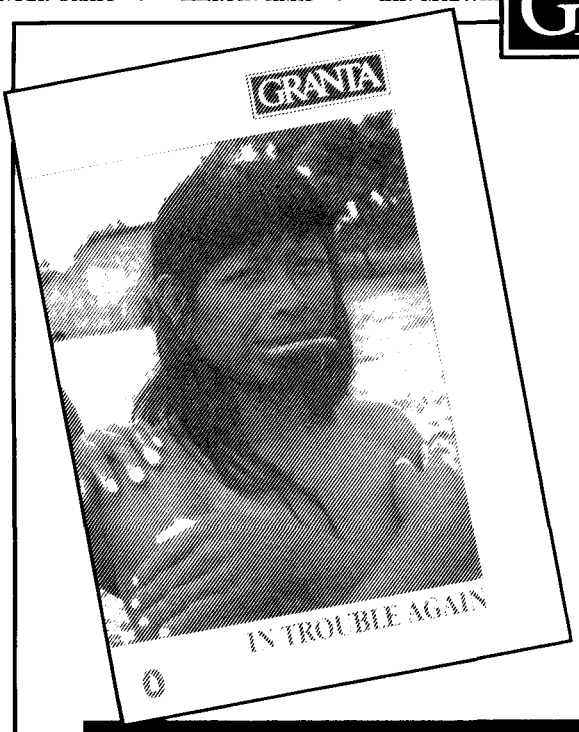

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of fortune which attended Eden's career means that, even though he finally became Prime Minister, the second half of the book has about it an atmosphere of anticlimax and decay. The events immediately leading up to the Suez crisis appear, not so much tragic, as a pathetic demonstration of loss of grip by a lonely and sensitive man who was out of touch with his colleagues, his allies, and the world around him. Curiously enough, he did remain in touch with British public opinion, which supported him over Suez—but this simply confirmed him in a fatal error. For it was not the aim of the Suez expedition that was so much at fault as its conduct.

Eden's life was a chapter of accidents, beginning with the characters of his appalling parents. Sir William Eden may have been a cultivated and amusing eccentric, and some of us will have enjoyed reading *The Tribulations of a Baronet*, a memoir by his other son, Timothy. But such people are usually easier to read about than to have as fathers. For her part, Lady Eden was always pawning things that did not belong to her and came to be regarded by her children as a pest. A somewhat unconventional childhood was followed by the plunge into war and the horrors of the Somme battle. This period of his life deeply marked Eden, and out of it came his book *Another World 1897-1917*, a little masterpiece written just before his death. Life in the trenches, with its waste of youth and the daily heroism of ordinary Englishmen, was to determine Eden's view of politics. He came to believe passionately that there must not be another war, and that those who had fought so well must be rewarded. Convinced that the social unity so touchingly demonstrated in wartime must be preserved in peace, he was an early "one nation" Tory, though he did not use the phrase. This made him a natural follower of Baldwin, whose protégé he became. In 1935, after the resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare over the Hoare-Laval pact, it seemed inevitable that Eden should become one of the youngest of Foreign Secretaries.

In this role he was a firm supporter of the League of Nations, resolutely opposed to the ambitions of the German and Italian dictators. When Chamberlain replaced Baldwin as Prime Minister, Eden soon resigned in protest against Chamberlain's secret diplomacy, which was an early instance of interference from the Prime Minister's office in the responsibilities of the Foreign Secretary. Typically, he refused to attack Chamberlain and his policies, but none the less again found himself in charge of foreign affairs in the wartime coalition. At this time he appeared the natural successor to Churchill as leader of the Tory Party. Here, however, his ill luck began to reveal itself. After six years in opposition, he was yet again to be Foreign Secretary under a Churchill who was not only reluctant to abandon office, but also entertained serious doubts as to whether "Anthony can do it". Meanwhile, Eden had been very ill, and was the victim of a series of disastrous errors on the part of his doctors.

When, in 1955, he succeeded Churchill, with whose lofty historical perspectives he had found himself increasingly out of sympathy, he was in bad health and had had little experience of home affairs. In foreign affairs, however, he was confident of his capacity—perhaps too confident. This confidence had been increased by his triumph at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indo-China. The final agreement was an important success for British diplomacy, and it is a pity that Robert Rhodes James does not give a more detailed account of Eden's major achievement. Vain though it proved as a barrier to the Viet Minh in Indo-China, the agreement nevertheless bought time to stabilise Malaysia, defeat Indonesian "confrontation", and allow the rift between Peking and Moscow to widen. American military intervention in South-east Asia in the 1950s rather than the 1960s would have probably destabilised the whole area and resulted in a reconciliation between the two Communist powers—much to the detriment of the West. At Geneva, with the agreement of all participants, Eden bought time. After the final American withdrawal from Viet Nam in the early 1970s the other Asian dominoes did not fall.

At Suez, on the contrary, Eden neglected the ordinary diplomatic precautions—most disastrously by failing to secure American support. Admittedly, Dulles and Eisenhower appear to have disagreed over American policy, and the signals from Washington remained enigmatic until the operation began. Even Macmillan, whose opinion it was that nothing could be done without tacit American support, misinterpreted what was said to him in Washington, as he later confessed. But Eden had a duty to be absolutely sure of American policy before he took his decision. He also had a duty to elicit from what seems to have been a monumentally inefficient Defence Staff a politically workable plan for the occupation of the Canal Zone.

He did neither. Moreover, he failed to realise that the real change along the Canal had come about when British troops were withdrawn as the result of an Anglo-Egyptian agreement which he had pushed through against opposition from Churchill. Nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company made little difference when the Egyptian Army was in possession of the Canal banks. One does not have to have a high opinion of Nasser (who led his own country to disaster later on) to believe that the Suez policy was muddled both in conception and in execution.

All this is fairly set out by Mr Rhodes James, who none the less seems a little puzzled (as who is not?) at the contradictions revealed in Eden's character by the crisis. Until then Eden had stood for the observance of international

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law and moderate policies. He was emphatically not "a daring pilot in extremity", and it was strange that he should have suddenly tried to behave like one. A care for social conditions at home and prudently negotiated agreements abroad came more naturally to him than *coups de main*. It is a paradox that the act for which his political career is remembered should have been so out of keeping with its previous course. The explanation—and this is a justification of biography—has to be sought in personal factors.

SIR EVELYN SHUCKBURGH'S DIARIES of his time as Eden's private secretary throw some light on the matter.[2] In this day-to-day record of life with Eden there recur references to his touchiness and vanity:

> "I am afraid I realise more clearly than before how terribly vain and egocentric he is. He can't really bear any conversation to take place which does not in some way bear upon himself, his politics, his popularity, his successes in the past or present." (31 January 1954)

Illness, unsteady nerves, acute sensitivity to criticism—such defects made him too quick to take decisions when there was political pressure on him to show himself as a "strong man", but also caused him to hesitate in their execution. His unhappiness communicated itself to the Foreign Office at a time when British policy was having to come to terms with diminished power ("W. Strang says, 'Don't you see why I am thankful to be retiring!'", writes Sir Evelyn). As Prime Minister, Eden was over-sensitive to criticism from his backbenchers and uneasily conscious of his own part in the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. He had hardly a personal friend in his own Cabinet, and those who, like Macmillan, egged him on to action later deserted him.

Despite everything, Sir Evelyn admired Eden; and in Mr Rhodes James's book we can see something of the statesman he might have been with better luck and better timing. As it was, Churchill's doubts were justified. Anthony could not "do it". But the enigma of his career remains, and Mr Rhodes James gives an intensely interesting account of this lonely and all too human figure who never complained of the blows fate dealt him. Here is a biography which should be read by those in search of political character.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTEREST of a different kind is presented by the appearance of the ninth volume of H. C. G. Matthew's great edition of the Gladstone Diaries.[3] This huge document is required reading for anyone interested in Victorian politics, society and religion, or in the mind of a great and complex figure who used public words rather to hide his thoughts than express them. *The Gladstone Diaries* require careful reading—deciphering almost—if the implications of the entries are to be fully understood. Mr Matthew helps the reader as much as he can. This volume covers Disraeli's great government and Gladstone's return to power at the end of the decade, following the Midlothian campaign. Its content has the characteristics of preceding volumes: the vast amount of recorded reading, the consciousness of being "ever in my great taskmaster's eye", the political notes, the persistent felling of trees. What an amount of work there is in these diaries! Just before his seventieth birthday Gladstone wrote: "Ah what need have I of what I may term spiritual leisure: to be out of the dust and heat and blast and strain, before I pass into the unseen world." But he was to be politically active for nearly twenty years more.

Mr Matthew's introduction helps us to understand the background of these six years, and he has also re-issued those of the previous volumes, adding two chapters on Gladstone's early life.[4] The book (and one would hope that in time there will be a second volume to cover the remainder of Gladstone's career) begins with the years of Toryism when his mind was concentrated on the relations between Church and State, and goes on to the crisis of the 1840s, when the shock of finding that his beliefs were incompatible with practical politics coincided with acute personal problems. These took the form of an upsurge of nervous energy discharging itself in sexual excitement of an indeterminate but upsetting nature. To counter this, strong measures were required; and, after his expeditions to "rescue" prostitutes, Gladstone had recourse to the scourge.

However, he overcame both crises, and his enormous administrative ability provided an unlimited outlet for his physical energy and restlessness. His periods as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1850s and '60s made of him the greatest administrator to hold that office. Mr Matthew points out that, in the mid-19th century, governments did not usually regard themselves as holding office in order to legislate. It was Gladstone's originality to conceive a series of measures, financial and fiscal, which led towards the creation of a liberal state. Free trade and low taxation could provide an environment where commerce and industry could flourish, and government stand aloof and profit from their expansion.

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[2] *Descent to Suez: Diaries 1951-56*. By EVELYN SHUCKBURGH. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.
[3] *The Gladstone Diaries. Vol. IX: January 1875-December 1880*. Edited by H. C. G. MATTHEW. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £55.00.
[4] *Gladstone 1809-1874*. By H. C. G. MATTHEW. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £15.00.

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W. H. Lecky in his great description of Gladstone wrote that:

> "What he willed he willed very strongly, and in order to attain it he would do things from which men less largely endowed with moral scruples would have shrunk."

The combination of "passion and casuistry" which Lecky found in him enabled him to convince himself that every change of course in a singularly devious career stemmed from the highest moral principles. The outbursts of demonic energy that marked his political life, as he reacted to issues like Ireland or the Bulgarian atrocities, were generated by his ability to invest politics with a quasi-religious passion.

Mr Matthew's biography has not yet reached the Midlothian campaign (though his latest introduction has), but signs of this capacity for volcanic eruption are present throughout Gladstone's life. His personality was potentially revolutionary in its force, and only the fact that he was contained by a stable society and institutions that limited the dangerous effects of political passion saved him from being an element destructive of the liberalism he sought to build. In his fulminations against what he regarded as the forces of evil there are anticipations of later intolerance.

A FAMOUS ANECDOTE tells of Gladstone, on being informed by telegram of the Queen's invitation to form a government, exclaiming "My mission is to pacify Ireland", and then resuming his felling of a tree. This was a mission which he did not fulfil, though he first tried to solve the problem of the Church, then that of land reform, and finally was prevented from trying a political solution by a split in his own Party. Two books on that symbol of one face of Irish intractability, the Reverend Ian Paisley, remind us that the problem is still there and that the serpents of religious strife still hiss loudly across St George's Channel.

The first of them, by two journalists from the *Irish Times*, is a straight political biography of Paisley.[5] It tells how he made himself the representative of Northern Irish Protestantism, a leader who managed to incarnate in himself all the fears and prejudices of his own people. The boy who preached his first sermon at the age of sixteen has become the founder of a Church and the as yet unchallenged head of a political movement. His views on the future of Northern Ireland are what they always have been, and in any case his followers would hardly permit any change in them. "There's no such thing as reconciliation. When you marry Christ to Beelzebub, then we'll be ready for talks with them [the Republic]."

The experiences of the last twenty years have simply confirmed Paisley and the Protestant people whom he represents in a policy of "No Surrender". If anything, this determination has become stronger since the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Change is a threat, and a threat intensifies the power of Paisley's leadership. Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak show that he is no extremist in the ordinary sense of the word; he can be cautious and prudent. But his power depends on his identification with an intensely conservative society, which is frightened and angry. "Solutions" to the Northern Irish problem are, therefore, worse than intermittent terrorism.

This biography, which includes much secret history—some of it dealing with areas that are ill known—is an excellent introduction to the politics of Protestant Northern Ireland, though, to be totally comprehensible, these must be put alongside political development and political rhetoric in the Republic. Steve Bruce, in *God Save Ulster*,[6] has written a more profound book and tried to answer some fundamental questions about Paisleyism and its relationship to Irish history. In particular, he takes a closer look at the Free Presbyterian Church, the religious base of Paisleyism, reminding us that Paisley is the only modern European politician to have founded his own Church. Since the ultimate cause of Ulster unionism and its attitudes is to be found in religion, in the fear that in a United Ireland Protestants would be unable to practise their faith or preserve their children from Roman Catholic contamination, this emphasis is well justified. Archaic, laughable even, though Protestant fears of "the blaspheming Bachelor of the Tiber" may be, they are nevertheless at the heart of the problem. Northern Ireland has become isolated in a time-warp, whose effect is to embalm its beliefs in tradition and to fragment its political life.

Mr Bruce also points out that some Protestant fears are not unjustified. Part of the Civil Rights movement was "always ultimately interested in dismantling Northern Ireland". The defeat of Terence O'Neill's attempt to bring North and South nearer together was not only Paisley's responsibility. In making this point, Mr Bruce modifies the picture drawn by Ed Moloney and Andy Pollak. His final conclusion is pessimistic:

> "Conflict is a more accurate term for Protestant/Catholic relations in Northern Ireland. Conflicts have outcomes, not solutions. Somebody wins and somebody loses."

Will there be finally a sort of Protestant *Götterdämmerung*, as he suggests? The Free Presbyterians and others will be a formidable morsel for anyone to digest. But this acute study (rather than biography) suggests that no reasonable end is or can be in sight. Meanwhile, "God has a people in this province."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY has different rules from biography even when it also touches on political life. The expression of interesting character is its essential quality; without that, no amount of meeting the great and good will enliven the book. Judged by this standard, Frank Giles's account of his time as a foreign correspondent and editor and, finally, as editor of the *Sunday Times*[7] does not alto-

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[5] *Paisley*. By ED MOLONEY and ANDY POLLAK. Poolbeg Press (Knockseean House, Forrest Gate, Swords, Co. Dublin, Ireland). £5.95.

[6] *God Save Ulster: The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism*. By STEVE BRUCE. Clarendon Press, Oxford. £15.00.

[7] *Sundry Times*. By FRANK GILES. John Murray, £13.95.

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gether come off. There are too many instant and rather superficial judgments on people in high places, too much intercontinental name-dropping. What saves Mr Giles is his account of what it was like to be one of Rupert Murdoch's editors. Much to his credit he achieves the feat of being fair to Mr Murdoch, who also was very fair to him—the job was offered for two years and held for two-and-a-half. This part of the book is lively, but one feels that Mr Giles's heart was not in the rest.

Sir Paul Wright's autobiography has far more meat in it.[8] He sets out to describe what it is like to be an Ambassador, in particular an Ambassador in Zaire. A lack of pomposity and a penchant for the description of practical detail make this an agreeable and sympathetic book. It also contains some interesting detail on British policy after Macmillan had taken it out of the doldrums of the 1950s with his decision to complete decolonisation and enter the European Community. Having some sort of definition of its task obviously made the Foreign Office a happier and more constructive place in the 1960s and the '70s than it had been under Eden.

The best comes last. Patrick Leigh Fermor's account of his journey through Hungary into Transylvania during the 1930s is a marvellous book, beautifully written and magical in its evocation of a world that has passed.[9] It has all the best qualities of a really good travel book—one in which the exotic borders on the familiar—but it is also autobiographical in that Mr Leigh Fermor, using the notes he kept at the time, looks down on his younger self with sympathy and understanding. Clad in Millet boots, breeches and puttees, he goes his way from great house to great house, meeting on the road gypsies, Jewish pedlars, and German settlers. There are encounters with charming peasant girls and other people's wives. All the time, the Central European and Balkan world streams by with its beauty and its cruelties, its traditional habits and its mix of nationalities. Lucky the reader who can share this experience with Mr Leigh Fermor! It is a feast of humanity. After all, that is what we seek both in biography and in autobiography. The setting is immaterial—Westminster or Wallachia. Disraeli would have appreciated Patrick Leigh Fermor. Despite his interest in the Balkans, Gladstone might not.

[8] *A Brittle Glory*. By PAUL WRIGHT. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £15.00.

[9] *Between the Woods and the Water*. By PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR. John Murray, £13.95.

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ENVY AND GRATITUDE (1957)

THESE FORMULATIONS, with their fundamentalist reverberation of Virtue and Sin, are from the writings of Melanie Klein, the Austrian-born psychoanalyst who pioneered in the development of child psychoanalysis. Freud burst the idyll of childhood with his theory of childhood sexuality; Klein demolished it further by demonstrating that the innocent babe was struggling with sharply conflicting states and experiences: love and hate; gratitude and envy; the "good breast" and the "bad breast".

Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work[1] is the life story of an immensely complex woman whose theories—deplored as they are for their excesses—have had, none the less, great impact on infant and child psychology and the psychoanalytic understanding and treatment of severe psychopathology.

Melanie Klein was born in Vienna on 30 March 1882, the youngest of the four children of Moriz Reizes and Libussa Deutsch. In middle adulthood her father had broken away from his orthodox Jewish background, acquired an academic and medical education, and married a woman 24 years his junior. As a middle-aged, Polish-born physician, Dr Reizes had difficulty obtaining patients, and the financial stability of the family was always uncertain. Illness was a constant presence: one daughter died in childhood of tuberculosis, and the only son, Emanuel, suffered from a chronic heart ailment of which he died at the age of 25. Melanie's father died when she was 18, shortly after her matriculation from the only *Gymnasium* for girls in Vienna that prepared them for the university. Faced with a dying husband and a profligate and ailing son, Mrs Reizes's considerable energies were concentrated on marrying off her two daughters. Melanie had planned to attend medical school, but at the age of seven-

[1] *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work*. By PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH. Alfred A. Knopf, $25.00; Hodder & Stoughton, £19.95.

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teen she became engaged to her second cousin, Arthur Klein, a chemical engineer. She married at twenty-one, still in mourning for her beloved brother Emanuel, and moved to the town of Rosenberg in Hungary, and later to Budapest. A daughter, Melitta, was born within the year, and Hans was born three years later.

Phyllis Grosskurth cites extensive correspondence to illustrate Melanie's unhappiness as a young wife and mother. Arthur Klein travelled frequently, and Melanie was dispatched to spa after spa to calm her nerves and ease her despondency, while her mother supervised the children and the household. A pivotal year in Melanie's life came in 1914: her youngest child, Erich, was born in July; her mother died in November; and she began psychoanalysis with Sandor Ferenczi, the celebrated Hungarian analyst who was one of Freud's closest associates. Psychoanalysis was still in the early stages of its development, and the boundaries between a therapeutic and a training analysis were fluid. Klein had entered psychoanalysis for treatment of her depression, and was encouraged by Ferenczi to extend Freud's clinical findings with adults to the treatment of children.

In 1919 she read her first paper before the Budapest Psychoanalytic Society, and was elected a member. That same year, in the wake of the post-World War I anti-Semitic "White Terror" in Hungary, Arthur Klein left for Sweden—a separation that terminated in divorce in 1925—and Melanie and the children took refuge with her parents-in-law in Rosenberg. That small town offered few prospects of patients, and Klein resolved to move to Berlin where in 1910 Karl Abraham, another member of Freud's inner circle, had founded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Society and Institute.

Melanie Klein had been introduced to Abraham by Ferenczi at the Sixth International Psycho-Analytic Congress at The Hague in 1920, and in 1921 she moved to Berlin with her youngest son, Erich. In 1924 she began a training analysis with Abraham that was prematurely ended by his death in 1925. Without the support of Abraham, opposition to Klein's views was growing in Berlin. At the same time, Alix Strachey, also training in Berlin, was writing enthusiastic letters about Klein's ideas to her psychoanalyst husband, James Strachey, in London. Through the intercession of the Stracheys, Klein was invited in the summer of 1925 to give a series of lectures on child analysis to the British Psycho-Analytic Society. The President of the Society, Ernest Jones, intrigued by the application of psychoanalytic principles to the treatment of children, envisioned London as a centre for child analysis. With his encouragement, Klein moved to London in the autumn of 1926 (her first patients were his wife and his two children). With a brief interruption during World War II, she worked there until her death in 1960.

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When Klein began psychoanalytic work with children in the 1920s, the only other investigators in this area were Hermine Hug-Hellmuth and Anna Freud in Vienna. Their approach to the treatment of children was cautious and educative: the analyst was urged to establish a friendly relationship with the child, and to guard against the development of negative transference manifestations. The possibility of a transference neurosis was negated on the grounds that children were still too bound up in reality with their parents.

Klein's work with children was moving her in an opposite direction. She found the play of children to be the equivalent of the verbal free associations required in the psychoanalysis of adults, in which conflicts and anxieties that are normally unconscious become accessible to consciousness. Klein claimed that aggressive and hateful as well as reparative or loving instincts were operative from birth, expressed in the earliest experiences and fantasies of swallowing, spitting, withholding, and expelling. Her technique of identifying primitive conflict did not eschew negative transference manifestations but, on the contrary, often aroused anxiety and distress in the child.

She maintained that the recognition of hatred and destructive rage directed towards loved and needed human objects mobilised internal integrative efforts that furthered the development of previously paralysed or inhibited children. Exploration of the primitive mental processes that characterise the infant mind led her to the investigation of manic-depressive and schizophrenic disorders, which could be understood as fixations or arrests at the earliest stages of infantile conflict.

During the 40 productive years of her psychoanalytic career, Klein's work inspired great loyalty and support, and equally fierce antagonism

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and opposition. It is difficult to penetrate the web of theoretical divergences, psychoanalytic politics, and personality dynamics that engendered such spirited factionalism in the British Psycho-Analytic Society between the 1930s and the 1950s. The opposition complained about her construction of an infantile phantasmagoria and the neglect of environmental factors, but Klein and her followers—the "Kleinians", as they were called—contended that it was identification of the innate and powerful aggressive forces in us all that aroused vehement resistance in the form of denial, avoidance, and ridicule. From a political standpoint, the argument seemed to be about faithfulness to the patriarchal tradition and the rights of inheritance. Did Klein's work follow in the pathways of Freud's teachings or did it deviate? Sigmund Freud arrived in London with his daughter Anna in 1938; he died there one year later. Sustained by the presence of his flesh-and-blood heir, Anna Freud's sympathisers felt confident in judging what was consonant with Freud's work and what was heretical. The final ingredient in the polemic was Melanie Klein's personality, which seemed to leave few people feeling neutral. Her admirers lauded her moral courage, her integrity in pursuit of truth, and her creative and discerning mind; her opponents criticised the smugness and righteousness with which she guarded her views, her insistence on absolute adherence to her opinions, and her need for total dominance.

The war between the Klein and Freud factions continued unabated, and in 1940 James Strachey wrote to Edward Glover:

> "The trouble seems to be to be with extremism, on *both* sides. My own view is that Mrs K. has made some highly important contributions to ψα [psychoanalysis], but that it's absurd to make out (a) that they cover the whole subject or (b) that their validity is axiomatic. On the other hand, I think it's equally ludicrous for Miss F. to maintain that ψα is a Game Reserve belonging to the F. family and that Mrs K's ideas are fatally subversive.
>
> These attitudes on both sides are of course purely religious and the very antithesis of science. They are also (on both sides) infused by, I believe, a desire to dominate the situation & in particular the future. . . ."

PSYCHOANALYSTS, prescribers of the standards of mental health and normalcy, are naturally assumed to lead exemplary lives. In the case of Melanie Klein, the disparity between "perfection of the life, or of the work", or between the moral pitch of her theories and her personal relationships is conspicuous. Klein's relationship with her children and her effect on them is probably the most disturbing feature in her life history. Phyllis Grosskurth presents convincing evidence that Klein's two key cases, "Fritz" and "Felix", described in *Love, Guilt and Reparation, and Other Works, 1921-1945* (1975), were her two sons, Erich and Hans. Eager to undertake the analysis of children in which Ferenczi in Budapest and Abraham in Berlin encouraged her, and lacking child patients, Klein went to work on her sons.

In itself, this was not as unusual or irresponsible as contemporary judgment would deem it, and Abraham

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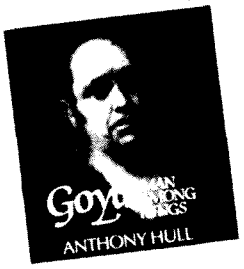
GOYA
Man Among Kings
Anthony Hull



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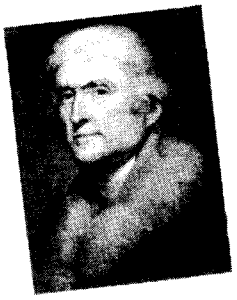

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actually encouraged her to deepen her exploration of Erich's anxieties. What is more disturbing or at least thought-provoking is that Klein, who has been criticised for her over-emphasis on constitutional aggression and envy and her neglect of environmental influences, makes no reference to compelling family circumstances in the lives of "Fritz" and "Felix". The anonymous mother's depressions, her frequent absences from home, the marital tension, and the moves from one place to another are not mentioned. Eric Clyne, a difficult schoolboy who underwent several analyses after his analysis with his mother, is quoted as saying that he "never had a real home—'so to speak' ".

Klein's older son, Hans, died at the age of 27 in a climbing accident that was rumoured to be suicide. Melitta Schmideberg, her only daughter—a psychoanalytically-trained physician and a member of the British Psycho-Analytic Society—severed her tie with her mother. Backed by her analyst, Edward Glover, she subsequently spear-headed the denunciation of Klein and her work that dominated meetings of the British Society for many years. On the day of her mother's cremation, Melitta Schmideberg reportedly gave a lecture in London, wearing "flamboyant red boots".

In general, the quality and durability of Klein's intimate relationships are questionable. After her separation from her husband in 1919, she had only one short-lived relationship with a man—a journalist with whom she was infatuated, but for whom she was apparently just one of many liaisons. Her friendships with colleagues were often problematic, especially if she felt that they were drifting away from unconditional commitment to her views. Her most enduring relationships were established with young students and associates who looked up to her as their mentor and devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the application of her theories.

PHYLLIS GROSSKURTH IS acutely aware of the complexities of Klein's life and their potential as disqualifying weapons in the hands of Klein's opponents. She observes in her Foreword that "few professional women have been subjected to as much distilled malice and rumor accepted as fact as Klein endured both during her lifetime and since her death." Grosskurth clearly admires Klein's achievement as a woman psychoanalyst and in her biography seeks to present a "more balanced evaluation". In attempting to do so, however, she often adopts a Kleinian stance—an intensely partisan and protective position from which she cannot resist weighting the scale for the reader.

She deprecatingly dismisses challengers such as Anna Freud and Edward Glover, without really conveying their perspective. The selective presentation of information is most obvious when Grosskurth deals with the touchy subject of Klein as mother. She presents painstaking details about the death of Klein's brother, is vociferous about the pathology in Klein's own mother, a woman with a "diabolical touch", yet has almost nothing to say about the adult lives of Eric Clyne

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and Melitta Schmideberg. Wouldn't it be reasonable to insist that Klein's work be judged on its own terms, without resorting to defensive strategies to deal with her private life? The contagion of the Kleinian atmosphere of factionalism is evident even in the Foreword, in which—among several people thanked for their assistance—Dr K. R. Eissler, Secretary of the Freud Archives, is singled out for his lack of cooperation.

THIS ABSORBING BIOGRAPHY of a major theorist and an unusual woman is meticulously researched, full of information about the history of psychoanalysis and its founding fathers and mothers, who come alive on these pages. The development of Klein's theories is carefully charted, and it is no fault of the presentation that Klein's abstruse ideas and dense style require further study on the part of an interested or uninformed reader.

Anyone expecting a psychobiographical examination of Klein's theories, however, will be disappointed. Grosskurth is weakest when she offers psychological analyses that are meaningless in their generality. She writes, for example, that:

> "Anna Freud and Melanie Klein were both aware that they were unwanted children, whose fathers had preferred their older sisters; and this affected them, in different ways, all their lives. . . . These personal factors suggest interesting possibilities for the reasons psychoanalysis diverged into two very different directions."

Grosskurth throws out provocative nuggets of information, but rarely ventures out on a solidly speculative or interpretive limb. We are told that Klein's childhood home was a hotbed of pathologically intense feeling, "a family riddled with guilt, envy, and occasionally explosive rages, and infused with strong incestuous overtones", yet no connection is made to Klein's exploration of the significance for mental health of mastering early aggression and envy. Grosskurth repeatedly comments on the dominating intrusiveness of Klein's mother, yet she also quotes Klein's recollections in old age: "My relation to my mother has been one of the great standbys of my life. I loved her deeply, admired her beauty, her intellect, her deep wish for knowledge. . . ." A potent idealisation from a woman who wrote so convincingly about the force of ambivalence towards one's earliest attachments. Klein's penchant for the exercise of power of mind over circumstance, characteristic of the course of her life as a whole, is an intriguing personal corollary to her theoretical emphasis on the influence of internal psychic reality on interpretation of external reality and the environment.

Melanie Klein might have been just another turn-of-the-century Viennese woman, not dissimilar from many of Freud's cases: passionate, highly intelligent, but bound in a sexually constricted marriage, submerged in domestic duties, with no influence outside the home. But, as Grosskurth observes:

> "This remarkable woman was able to surmount personal and professional difficulties and embark on fearless creative paths of her own, even if at great cost to some of those close to her."

This last qualification evokes the complexities of Klein's personality, which no doubt contributed to the antagonism she aroused. Until very recently Melanie Klein's work was studied and respected in Europe and South America, but was virtually unknown in the USA because it was the Anna Freud contingent of psychoanalysts who emigrated to the United States before World War II. Even today, mention of Klein's name there can merely provoke a bemused smile: the excesses and fallacies of her theories are better recognised than her enduring contributions.

Isabel's Agoraphobic

They said she should be glad
she had so much. It seemed
it was too much for her. She
wanted for nothing.

They said, Take a hold
on yourself! She held on until
she couldn't take any more.
Then she let herself go.

Jammed in, preserved,
pale as a bottled pear,
curled like a fiddle-head,
a frond of bracken, foetus

pickled in alcohol.
Smiles towards sundown.
How is she in herself?
Oh keeping very well. Considering.

Dorothy Nimmo

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Books Encountered

A Word or Two Before You Go. . . By JACQUES BARZUN. Wesleyan University Press, $14.95.

Another briskly normative blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of solecisms. Their sources include not only advertisements, the business section of *The New York Times*, and cutesy acronyms like MOMA, but also *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Professor Barzun ends with a noble plea for a common tongue.

Destined to be Wives: The Sisters of Beatrice Webb. By BARBARA CAINE. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £15.00.

Meticulous and absorbing account of the other eight Potter sisters, with family trees relating them to many respected names, from Cripps to Muggeridge. Decorum concealed sibling rivalry, suicide, cocaine, and extra-marital adventures, mostly by men, but also by the youngest sister.

Head Above Water. By BUCHI EMECHETA. Fontana, £3.50.

Wonderfully direct autobiography by a Nigerian girl who came first-class to Britain in 1962 expecting Jane-Austen-land and finding cold Liverpool and North London lodgings. She left her feckless husband and kept herself and their five small children by librarianship and writing, having taken a sociology degree. Truly Victorian grit.

Ari: The Life and Times of Aristotle Socrates Onassis. By PETER EVANS. Cape, £12.95.

The fourth and most complete biography in English. Based partly on interviews, partly on letters, and partly on jet-set gossip, it suffers from the vices of the genre, but nevertheless paints a frank picture of its astute, snobbish, sexually voracious subject, an Eric Ambler character in real life.

The Annotated Innocence of Father Brown. By G. K. CHESTERTON. Edited by MARTIN GARDNER. Oxford University Press, £12.95.

Not an abstrusely titled piece of lit. crit., but the text of the first Father Brown collection, with pertinent notes by the American connoisseur of oddities who did the same for *Alice*, *The Snark*, and *The Ancient Mariner*. It includes variant readings and a full bibliography: all good donnish fun.

Nan: The Life of an Irish Travelling Woman. By SHARON GMELCH. Souvenir Press, £10.95.

The subject and source: Nan Donahue, an Irish "tinker" or gypsy, born in 1919. The listener and writer: a young anthropologist, author of two previous books and now an associate professor at Union College in Schenectady, N.Y. Despite some blarney, it movingly reconstructs the transition from Romany to trailer-dwelling, welfare-drawing town-dwellers.

Out of Egypt: Scenes and Arguments of an Autobiography. By IHAB HASSAN. Southern Illinois University Press, $15.95.

Weird, but fascinating: elegant memoirs, interspersed with reflections, by a well-known literary critic born in Cairo in 1925, who left for good at 21 and is now a Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Seeking "scope" in America, he carried Egypt with him. His only return is Proustian.

Faking It: Art and the Politics of Forgery. By IAN HAYWOOD. Harvester Press, £12.95.

Perceptive but oddly inconclusive examination of copying, forgery, plagiarism, breach of copyright, imitation, concealed quoting, etc., by a tutor in English at the Open University, critical of capitalist attitudes to art, and seemingly delighted by Keating and van Meegeren. But is it enough to invoke response alone?

Freud and his Father. By MARIANNE KRÜLL. Translated by ARNOLD J. POMERANS. Hutchinson, £16.95.

Why did Freud reject his early view that neurosis came from youthful sexual seduction, and espouse Oedipus, infantile sexuality, and the libido? Partly, Dr Krüll learnedly argues, because of his ambivalent need to please his father. Copiously documented exploration of an earnestly stuffy, highly-charged family.

The Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations Since 1945. Edited by WM. ROGER LOUIS and HEDLEY BULL. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £35.00.

Symposium, mainly by the great and the good, resulting from the first collaboration between Ditchley Park and the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington D.C. Yes, Sir Michael Howard concludes, there was something there; and it would be a great pity if it gave way to "new American" indifference and "new British" dislike.

Cambodian Witness: The Autobiography of Someth May. Edited and with an Introduction by JAMES FENTON. Faber, £9.95.

Harrowing account of a doctor's family who fled from Phnom Penh when the Khmer Rouge took over in 1975. They fetched up four years later in a refugee camp on the Thai-Cambodian border. Only four (out of fourteen) survived. Someth May began his book in the camp, and finished it in England. He now lives in Washington, and writes as to the manner born.

Ends of the World. By CECILY MACKWORTH. Carcanet, £9.95.

Illustrated, handsomely produced and vividly impressionistic memoirs of pre-War and wartime France, the London Blitz, Palestine, Algeria, post-War Paris, etc., though far less full on her wartime escape than her 1941 *I Came out of France*, sadly long out of print.

The Violent Society. Edited by ERIC MOONMAN. Frank Cass, £15.00, paper £7.50.

Somewhat disparate essays by the editor, Paul Wilkinson, Richard Clutterbuck, and others, on "myths and realities", the idealised past, domestic violence, stress, public disorder, terrorism, and possible responses—including, from The Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, the faith and hope common to most religions. And charity?

Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood. By VICTOR PERERA. André Deutsch, £8.95.

"I was not quite six when I was circumcised for the second time because the first job, performed by a Gentile doctor, was pronounced unclean by our new rabbi." This Roth-like opening announces novel-like memoirs of life in the Jewish colony of war-torn Guatemala, by a writer well schooled on *The New Yorker*. Irresistible.

Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew: An Italian Story. By DAN VITTORIO SEGRE. Peter Halban (42 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1HB), £12.95.

Imagine an Italian Jew from a prominent but impoverished Piedmont family serving in the British Army alongside an Arab and under a Jewish Palestinian sergeant, and you have in a nutshell the cultural confusion Professor Segre so cannily explores in this labyrinthine, spell-binding autobiography, full of passionate tenderness.

The Prodigy: A Biography of William James Sidis, The World's Greatest Child Prodigy. By AMY WALLACE. Macmillan, £10.95.

The unpromising subtitle belies a sympathetic study of how the boy, a godson of William James, with an IQ probably higher than Einstein's, grew from speaking at six months and reading a newspaper at eighteen months to becoming an unhappy rebel and eccentric, largely owing to media exposure and parental strife.

R.M.

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EAST & WEST

Letter from Shanghai

Smashing the Second Confucius

By Anne McLaren

THERE IS actually night-life in Beijing now. After several decades of scurrying home at six o'clock to their walled-in compounds, the citizens of Beijing have broken with the informal curfew of the past. Young couples stroll the streets looking for intimate nooks, and unpaired young men roam round in search of excitement.

Early last December I went to the new *Kara-OK* Bar on Dongdanbei Street. It is an unabashed imitation of the bar of the same name provided for foreign tourists in the Beijing Hotel, with the same mirrored walls, intimate lighting, and live music. The customers are not well-heeled foreign businessmen and tourists but young Beijing professionals and students, who clearly scorn the dumpling soup and mutton hotpot stalls frequented by the common herd.

Our small group (three foreigners) quickly struck up an acquaintance with the largely male clientele. We sipped Chinese brandy, grape wine and soda-ice while an enthusiastic pop duo beat out rock music in one corner. The vocalist was hard to ignore. He moaned romantically into a microphone, doing his best to gyrate (*à la* Elvis) while remaining perched on a wooden stool. As the evening wore on, till the late (very late) hour of ten o'clock, the bartender removed our empty glasses and started mopping up the floor. Taking his cue, the singer warmed up to the finale. Embracing the microphone in both hands, his knees swivelling furiously on the stool, he beat out the final round with raunchy gusto—"*Long, long, long live the Communist Party! Long, long live Chairman Mao!*" The audience exploded into a hysteria of laughter. As someone whispered, "This is the perfect parody!"

Chairman Mao has been long dead in China, and the people know it. This was my first visit to China since a year spent as an exchange student during 1978-79. Now I had returned in the guise of a "visiting scholar", subject to an academic protocol which allowed me an hotel room with bathroom, a chauffeur-driven car, and my individual choice from the hotel menu—aeons removed from the cracked-plaster dormitory, gritty rice, and wrinkled apples of my student days. When one has varied meals and a hot bath every day one's outlook indubitably becomes brighter. The dusty, dingy China of the 1970s had clearly become the modernising, pragmatic, and far more civilised China of the '80s. After all, if one can buy mandarin oranges, tea-brewed eggs, peanuts, and even honeydew melons on street corners in the middle of winter, there must have been something of a leap forward.

"WHY ARE THE STUDENTS marching now for democracy?" I asked an old Shanghai friend. "Won't democratic improvements come in due course anyway? Surely life has become easier in recent years. . . ?"

"But we salary-earners cannot afford to buy the mandarin oranges", was his reply. "Our wages have never kept up with inflation. My family, all three generations, is still in these same two rooms."

Too true. If one set aside the colour-TV set and the stereo, the room where my friend lived with his wife and son was the same squalid cave I had seen seven years ago. A double bed took up half the room; presumably their child slept in his parents' bed or with his grandparents upstairs. A wooden barrel was the only toilet, and this time I knew better than to test its stability. A gas-stove set up outside the front door was the only kitchen. There were no taps, no running water.

MY FORMER CLASSMATE was now a teacher at a political college. In the intervening years I had sent him many Western works of fiction (*Brave New World, Darkness at Noon, 1984*). His translation of one of these works had already won him a literary prize and the equivalent of a year's salary in royalties. His completed translation of *Animal Farm* had mouldered in a drawer for years ("*drawer literature*", as they say in China, as previously in the German *Reich*) but now the climate had thawed sufficiently to allow its publication by a remote regional press. I said, jokingly, that I hoped it would win him five years' salary in royalties. He smiled and told me that although he couldn't participate in the student campaign (due to his academic position) he was none the less engaged in what could only be called an intellectual guerrilla war with the régime.

"The students need a philosophy, a source of ideas. It's my job to give it to them. This is an effective way of undermining Party control from within."

I knew that he had long been a member of the Communist Party. With a broad grin on his face he told me of his recent promotion to Secretary of his branch.

ANNE MCLAREN, *a young Australian scholar, is currently an American Association of University Women Fellow at the John Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University. In 1978-79 she spent a year in China as an exchange student, witnessing the Democracy Campaign of late 1978. She recently returned for a month's visit under the Australia-China Academy exchange scheme.*

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"I don't tell them that my real passion is not Communist dialectics but Nietzschean aesthetics. Actually, intellectuals have gained little from the reforms. We see the children of Party cadres getting rich 'on the side', while we earn less even than the peasants who bring their farm produce in to the street stalls. We intellectuals are not even permitted a decent journal to express our vision of life. . . ." He went on to quote Nietzsche: "Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere the horror or absurdity of existence."

THE INTELLECTUAL AS GUERRILLA: I saw signs of it everywhere. In the exhibition of young artists in the Fine Arts Gallery of Beijing, I noted the abstract and impressionistic compositions, the muted greys and contorted lines of a work entitled *Nightmare*, and the explicit nude picture which couples glanced at quickly with pretended suavity. One work caught my eye. It was entitled *Eternity* and showed a barefoot peasant woman leading an ox; her gaze was cast down at the earth as she plodded slowly along, her back bent with the weight of a tall pannier. In the background was an ancient cave-painting design of an undulating train of oxen, stretching to infinity. The exaggerated hump of the ox, the bent back of the woman, and the slow curve of the ancient oxen fused into a powerful image of endless continuity. Was this the young artist's vision of contemporary China, an eternal cycle of recurrence. . . ? Another painting, entitled *Sorrow*, was evidently a call to militancy. It was a modernistic design of a fractured violin. According to the sign beneath, the work was "dedicated to Beethoven, on the anniversary of his death, and to all brave warriors who fight valiantly for the truth. . . ."

IN THE WINDSWEPT STREETS of Beijing University, two "brave warriors" stood hawking their mimeographed pamphlets. "Democracy Forum seminars—only forty cents each", they cried to the rush-hour crowd. But it was eleven-thirty and time for the midday meal. Students rushed by with enamel bowls in their hands, and a hungry glint in their eyes. The regional cities of Hofei and Wuhan had already begun their marches; but the time was not yet ripe at the nation's capital. When I visited the University (on 13 December) a poster had just been pasted up—the first poster of the movement in Beijing. The author began plaintively:

> "This is definitely not a large-character manifesto [these are now unconstitutional in China] but purely a matter of scholarly debate. The school has no right to rip it down."

The poster called on students to work for democratic elections and freedom of the press. They asked: "Why is it that the constitutions of other socialist countries allow provision for candidates to have equal space in the media but ours does not? . . ."

When I returned to the University two days later, the poster had been ripped to pieces and covered with harmless advertisements for colour photography.

The mimeographed works of these novice political thinkers gave me an insight into the ideas of the students and intellectuals who were to throw themselves vigorously into "the fight for democracy" in the ensuing weeks. One pamphlet, entitled *Traditional Culture and Modernisation*, was by Li Ming, the pen-name of a lecturer at the Beijing Cadre School of Management.

According to Li Ming, the ills of contemporary socialist China were due to the strangulation of traditional cultural patterns in the modern polity. He called for a complete negation of Chinese traditional culture and a wholehearted absorption of the basic concepts underlying Western natural and social sciences. Of all the Western concepts held up for emulation, he regarded human equality as the most basic. This belief he traced back to the Western religious belief that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and that man needed God to curb his innate tendency to do evil. After the Enlightenment this ideal was expressed as "everyone is equal in the eyes of the law", and from this arose democratic rights and the idea of a Constitution to enforce those rights.

By contrast, in China's secular Confucian culture there was a belief in the innate goodness of human nature. If one cultivates the inner man then there is less need for a legal system of coercion. Furthermore, in the Chinese tradition there was a humanistic concern for the relationship between Man and Nature, but the relationship between people was always one of hierarchy. He emphasised that China's rigid social hierarchies and its lack of a deeply-rooted consciousness of law were ubiquitous. What is needed is not an attempt to preserve "Chinese characteristics" in the thrust towards modernisation (as senior leaders would have it) but total abandonment of traditional cultural values.

Even the way that Marxism is used in China, according to Li Ming, reflected China's traditional patterns of behaviour. Whereas in the past China had a Confucius, now it had a Marxucius, "a second Confucius".

> "We are not allowed to do anything [Li Ming wrote] that has not been laid down by 'the second Confucius', as if Marxism encompasses the entire theoretical universe. All we can do is add footnotes to the works of Marx, just as in the past the entire Chinese philosophical tradition could be regarded as mere footnotes to the works of Confucius. China had no Locke, Montesquieu, or John Stuart Mill; we had no thinkers who conceived of a different political system. . . ."

LI MING'S SWEEPING DISMISSAL of Chinese culture and his call for outright Westernisation represents one extreme of the political spectrum in China. But he is not alone in his views about "the second Confucius". The influential Yan Jiaqi (head of the Political Institute at China's leading research institute, the Academy of Social Sciences), in the November 1986 issue of the Guangzhou journal *Gongming*, called for a "complete liberalisation of cultural activities" and condemned those Party elements who wished to "protect Marxist purity".

He argued that Marxism had provided China with yet

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another form of the intellectual arrogance that China has assumed for thousands of years as "the centre of civilisation". The Chinese regarded their own form of Marxism as the highest peak of Marxist theory, but in reality they had made it into a closed system of thought which is thoroughly interwoven with traditional Chinese concepts. For instance, Marxist democracy is defined as "listening to popular grievances, accepting criticism and the selection of the meritorious to office", all of which are key ethical concepts of Confucianism. On the grounds of "protecting Marxist purity", there are those who protect obviously feudal elements by labelling them "Marxist" and who condemn universal humanitarian concepts as "un-Marxist". This is in reality a reversion to the bankrupt 19th-century theory that Chinese thought should be retained as the cultural essence, and only Western technology, not Western liberal ideas, should be adopted. Yan also openly called for the "National People's Congress"—not the Communist Party's Central Committee—to be the ultimate organ of state power. Only then could the nation live up to its title as "People's Republic".

The polemical pamphlets and manifestos which I saw in China's "winter of discontent", before and during the start of the democracy demonstrations, did more than just denounce the "feudalistic" elements of modern China. Deng Xiaoping himself had done this many times. The real "threat to the state"—and a main reason for the current crackdown—is that these young critics reject the official model for China's modernisation, "socialism with Chinese characteristics". They also reject the idea put forward in some quarters that China should seek to evolve into another of the economically-developing but authoritarian states of the Pacific seaboard: Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore. They proffer instead the liberal democracies of the West, especially that of the USA, as models for emulation. Li Ming cited the case of President Carter, who when informed that a public-opinion poll had found him to be the "stupidest" President ever, replied, "I feel honoured that because of our great democratic system, even such a stupid President as myself has not made too many stupid blunders. . . ."

How would a Chinese leader respond, Li Ming asked rhetorically, if a similar question was put to him?

ANOTHER DISSIDENT, Wang X, who is a doctoral candidate of "Marxist-Leninist theory" at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, denounced the monolithic polity of modern-day China which insists on "unity and homogeneity" at the expense of "plurality and diversity". Nothing new here; this is a statement which could easily come from the official media. But then he went on to add:

> "Capitalism stresses competition and tolerates differences between people. Furthermore, capitalist countries lack the rigidly hierarchical caste of privilege which operates in China. The children of senior cadres are always the first to reap the advantages of any new government policy. They are the first to run privileged businesses from their official positions, to enjoy trips overseas, and to take up top government positions. President Reagan cannot put his own son in the White House; but in China corruption is a way of life. . . ."

Wang accused the Deng administration of merely "tinkering" with democratic political reform in order to promote greater economic efficiency. The radical reformers demand that democratic reform should be the lynchpin and ultimate goal of structural political change. Wang noted that "the small tigers" of South-east Asia (Singapore, South Korea) have economic growth but not democracy. Even Hitler's Nazi state undertook "administrative reforms". Shouldn't democracy be viewed, not as a method of economic management, but as a goal in its own right?

As I WRITE, Yan Jiaqi and other outspoken intellectuals and writers have been accused of "fomenting student unrest". They may soon be forced to spend their time writing "drawer literature" or, worse, doing labour in the Chinese Gulag.

I RETURNED AGAIN to the newly renovated Jinjiang Hotel at Shanghai. In 1979 it had been the more select of the pre-War hotels of the old Concession areas, with ballrooms, polished wood panelling, and worn upholstery. Since those days, it has undergone something of a facelift. "The bathroom is *just* like the one *the Queen* stayed in!", observed a Shanghai friend (she had followed the Queen's visit avidly on TV). Within the walled hotel compound is a ring of expensive shops where the foreign tourist can buy anything from glistening gilt Buddhas to exotic fur coats. The art-deco *Café-rêve*, on one side of the complex, had become one of the most expensive coffee-bars in Shanghai.

One cold night—the "democracy campaign" had just begun in the city—I changed into cotton trousers and flat shoes, and slipped past the glittering array of tourist shops into the dark alleys of downtown Shanghai. I wanted to go to the "People's Square" to read the wall-posters and talk to the campaigners. It was not to be. Had the police learnt from the tumultuous days of 1978, when tens of thousands of the unemployed young had held the city to ransom for several months? A large portion of the Square was walled off by a wire fence, and the only side left open was impenetrable, due to a tight police cordon. The student activists, who had triumphantly marched through the streets of the city in the afternoon and rallied in the Square, were now totally isolated from the huge mass of ordinary citizens who had followed their progress with curiosity and, possibly, sympathy. Just beyond the cordon, inside the Square, were squads of Public Security Police carrying batons and walkie-talkies.

I watched two young girls dare to climb the wire fence around the perimeter; they dropped into the Square to join the demonstrators. Shortly afterwards a male student braved the police to come to the fence and talk to the crowd. I squeezed up to the wire. At last I had the opportunity to put my innocent questions.

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"Who are you and what are you demonstrating for. . . ?"

"We're students from many Shanghai universities, and we're demonstrating for democracy and freedom of the press. We just want to make a peaceful protest. We're not attempting to oppose the present administration but just want to put our point of view, in a non-violent way. We see freedom of speech and of the press as the first step to the achievement of democratic reforms."

"Is there a student group which organises these demonstrations?"

"No, there is no organisation or leaders, but we do get in touch with students from other universities."

"Are you worried about police violence?"

"Last night there was some scuffling with the police and some students were injured. Today we're protesting about that as well."

"Can you leave the Square if you wish?"

"Yes, but no one can get in."

"How long will you stay?"

"Even though I've had no dinner, I'll stick it out until we get an apology from the police."

"Aren't you worried about what might happen to you?"

"No. . . . I will not be leaving."

I watched as he moved away towards the tiny knot of people in the centre of the Square. In the darkness I could just make out a few lonely figures separated from the crowd by a vast plain of cement. As I strained my eyes to see the milling shadows, I was reminded of the epigram of the controversial young poet Gu Cheng:

My black eyes come from the black night
But I use them to search for light.

Bored by the lack of action, the crowd of onlookers by the fence slowly dispersed. Parents called to children and wheeled them away on bicycles. Young couples departed hand in hand. Last-minute shoppers scurried off to the market stalls. As the crowd thinned, only the police maintained a stalwart vigil.

The Pharaoh's Sandals

"The Pharaoh carved two prisoners
On the soles of his sandals; one a negro,
The other an Asian from Mesopotamia."

Reading that, the rafters of my skull
Creak with the pounding of shoes and feet:
Pheidippides, leathered in blood, announcing

Victory in Athenian streets; the Nazarene's
Insteps spiked to a tree; discalced
Palmers sanctifying roads; dancers

Tapping primeval codes; lovers
Cushioned on insoles of cloud; lice-
Laced tramps; the tonal essence

Of Van Gogh's boots; slow-motion
Astronauts striding for mankind. But three
Stark images stand apart:

The farmer, the soldier and the children of war.
The farmer brought his daughter to the hospital
Door, then returned to the car for her feet.

The soldier's boot lay wedged
On a last of clay, trophied in mud
And blood; hobnailed, not star-studded.

And in Belsen and Dachau, children's shoes
Were piled in haunting pyramids. "The Pharaoh
Carved two prisoners on the soles

Of his sandals; one a negro, the other
An Asian from Mesopotamia", left his footprints
On the sand and sheltered from the raw sirocco.

Tim Cunningham

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DISCUSSION

Of Lords, Senators, & Plain Misters

A Reply to Irving Kristol—By MAX BELOFF

IRVING KRISTOL wrote an article in *The Times* (London) of 26 August 1986 in which he advocated that British holders of titles should abandon their use except on "ceremonial occasions"—undefined—and that the media should give only their "real" names when reporting their doings. Although the date fell in the "silly season" of political journalism, it is clear that this was not meant as a joke but intended seriously. And if one had any doubts about Mr Kristol's intentions, they would have been removed by the rest of the column which claimed that this was meant to be a contribution to removing the English sense of "class" which Mr Kristol feels to be one of Britain's major weaknesses.

> "The English . . . exude class distinctions and consciousness as a spider exudes his web. But, unlike the spider, a great many Englishmen (and many more Welsh and Scots) find themselves trapped in their own web, and are likely to become irritated, frustrated or even downright enraged. This is an unhealthy situation."

Perhaps a peer, even if only a "Life Peer", is the person to put him right. In the first place, I find it curious that this suggestion comes from someone who has, according to the best authority, "cheerfully picked up the label of neo-conservative"[1] (just as my spiritual, though not physical, ancestors cheerfully picked up the label "Tory").

I am inclined to think that Mr Kristol, for all his willingness to endorse an honours system as an incentive to seeking distinction ("something very desirable in our democratic age") is in fact as incapable as most Americans of being a conservative in any profound sense, and is simply a democrat like everyone else. This incapacity to escape from democratic presuppositions has, as a brilliant British scholar of the younger generation has justly perceived, made it difficult for even the most knowledgeable of American historians to do full justice to English history:

> "The English have always lacked that universally diffused belief which I find in all groups of American students that I teach, that their political system is a *democracy* and is premised upon democratic values."

Or again:

> "Some of my pupils are conservative, some radical, a handful might even be called disaffected: but almost none of them are instinctively democratic in the modern American sense. English understandings of liberty have always had much more to do with the rule of law than with democracy; in England the second of these things has not been a precondition of the first."[2]

But even if one accepts this democratic approach, Mr Kristol is strangely inconsistent. Not only does he approve of honours in themselves, he has (he tells us) nothing against the House of Lords. Now, one can understand a democrat, English or American, who would hold that it is improper for any part of legislative authority to rest with a non-elected chamber. Should such authority really be conferred by heredity or nomination? And yet, despite the curtailing of the powers of the House of Lords, it does retain a degree of influence over legislation, and through television broadcasts has evoked some public understanding that this is the case. Nothing has recently been more agreeable for the non-democrat than to find socialists, trade-union leaders and suchlike persons appealing to the House of Lords to undo the mischief done by the elected majority of the House of Commons.

WHAT IRVING KRISTOL APPEARS to dislike is not the existence of titles or the powers that go with them, but simply their use. One could certainly argue that there is something odd in addressing someone as "My Lord" or calling someone "Lord So-and-So" when the title itself still carries with it an echo of a long-departed feudalism. After all, it is true that I live in a three-room flat and not in a castle, and have not an acre to my name. But is the use of such a title any odder than the American use of Senator—a title derived from an even more remote past than the Middle Ages? I am sure Mr Kristol could think of some American senators who would look very odd in a toga, just as I would look very odd in armour.

It may be that Mr Kristol is right to believe that some English people are worried by the psychological effects upon

[1] Gillian Peele, *Revival and Reaction: The Right in Contemporary America* (1984), p. 19.

[2] *Revolution and Rebellion*. By J. C. D. CLARK. Cambridge University Press, £20.00, $34.50; paper £6.95, $9.95.

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them of the class system and class-consciousness. He tells us that he has

> "met dozens of British émigrés who have assured me that escaping from the 'class system' was one of the blessings they most appreciated in America. When I inquired further, it always turned out that this 'class system' was less a sociological reality than a subjective code that governed perception and sensibility. But it was nonetheless real for that."

Perhaps they did, and perhaps they meant it; though it may simply be that they thought this would please their American hosts. They did not seemingly claim that this was why they had emigrated in the first place. Perhaps because it was evident that like most other migrants they had moved in order to get more tax advantages, more money, more perks . . . and why not? I doubt myself if these worries are widely experienced; and whether, if they are, they should outweigh the benefits of having a *class* system which where it is not congealed into a *caste* system might be thought of as a source of strength rather than weakness.

IT HAS BECOME a cliché among American commentators on British affairs—often echoed by their British counterparts anxious to be in the swim—that the class system in British life, fostered not only by the Honours System, but by educational institutions and other forms of social conditioning, is the explanation for Britain's relative lack of industrial success over the past century. Correlli Barnett is, I suppose, the most distinguished exponent of this point of view.[3] The main difficulty with this thesis, so I have always found, is that the very point in time—the middle decades of the 19th century—that saw Britain at the apogee of her power, admired, envied, and hated by the world (like America today) was the point at which the complexity and institutionalisation of the class structure were also at their peak.

One does not need to go back to the Middle Ages to find a Britain ruled and largely administered by an aristocracy. Of this sometimes forgotten fact, one is powerfully reminded by the publication of an important book, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914*, by John Beckett of the University of Nottingham.[4] It is not exactly bedside reading; it incorporates the investigations of many scholars besides Mr Beckett, and many of these investigations are necessarily statistical. But if Mr Kristol is really concerned to understand the relevance of titles and the setting in which contemporary Britain should be judged, he might well begin here.

Let me make it clear that the titles of nobility—and other honours: baronetcies and knighthoods—which Irving Kristol would like to abolish in everyday use are not central to Mr Beckett's analysis. For him, the aristocracy in England and indeed in the United Kingdom as a whole is not by any means limited to the holders of titles. For they stand only on the upper slopes of a pyramid whose lower strata are composed of mere country gentlemen. What he shows is that for the two-and-a-half centuries with which he is concerned, England had a recognised ruling class, identified by the possession of land, and that this class was composed of some 10,000 families. It was quite a porous system, thanks to the manner in which the land was held and passed on; so that families drop out and come in as they lose land or are in a position to acquire it. Most titles were granted in this period, and on the basis of their holders having enough land to justify the rank—the more land, the higher the title to which one could aspire. Dukes had most. And because of the workings of primogeniture, younger sons and their descendants would cease to be members of the nobility so that the Continental situation of impecunious noblemen—a caste with nothing but titles—never came into being in England.

What was assumed on all sides as the counterpart of the ownership of estates and, at the top, of hereditary titles was an obligation to serve the needs of the community by providing its government. By and large, this obligation at both the central and local level was taken seriously.

IT HAS, OF COURSE, ALWAYS been accepted that 18th-century Britain was dominated by the landed interest. Mr Beckett follows some recent research in arguing that this domination remained true for most of the 19th century as well. The House of Lords continued to play an important constitutional role and to retain an important though decreasing hold on the composition and behaviour of the House of Commons. At local level, power was retained even more decidedly where the counties were concerned. Not till 1888 were the traditional instruments of authority replaced by an elective system, and even then a measure of influence was retained—as it was, to a lesser extent, in urban areas as well. It is too often forgotten that the Earl of Rosebery was not only a Liberal Prime Minister but also the first chairman of the London County Council; from Lord Rosebery to Ken Livingstone—ah, what a fall was there!

It can, therefore, be argued that despite the First and

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[3] Correlli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (1972). *The Audit of War*. By CORRELLI BARNETT. Macmillan, £14.95. The thesis is put even more bluntly in M. C. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (1982).

[4] *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914*. By J. V. BECKETT. Blackwell, £22.50.

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Second Reform Acts, the great modernisation in British government, in the legal apparatus, and in the provision of governmental services that marked the 19th century was largely the fruit of aristocratic, not middle-class, leadership. It was not the Industrial Revolution that ended aristocratic dominance, but the agricultural depression of the 1880s, though the full impact of this was not felt until after 1918. Indeed, the landowners found it not too hard to adapt themselves to industrialsation—after all, coal and other minerals were under their lands, and the canals and railways had to cross them. Urban development helped to maintain (and even to increase) the fortunes of the greater among them.

FOR THE SUBSEQUENT passage from aristocratic to near-democratic rule, many convergent explanations can be offered. What they have in common, as Mr Beckett points out, is that it came to be realised as a fact that property in land was no longer an important key to power sufficient to justify its being the foundation of a ruling class. The Life Peerages Act of 1958 can be seen as the official seal on the process. Yet it is worth pointing out that even Life Peers have to include a territorial reference in their full title—though they may have no proprietorial connection with it whatever.

Whether this process has had good or bad results it is, I think, far too soon to say. One could argue that neither the Welfare State nor faith in financial incentives has so far produced either a more satisfactory solution of social problems or a more widespread dedication to public service on the part of the better-off than was found in the world Mr Beckett describes. The possession of land may not be the ideal foundation for other distinctions; but money, and the consumer goods it can provide, do not seem (where Mr Kristol's countrymen are concerned) to have produced anything better. Aristocratic patronage gave British politics Disraeli and Gladstone. I leave it to Mr Kristol to tell us what moneyed men have offered the American electorate since money became the key to nomination, if not to election.

All this may seem a long way from Irving Kristol's original point. My defence of the use of titles would not be to pretend they still have their old significance but simply that it would be wrong to remove from the British scene a link, however tenuous, with past achievements. The preservation of such links has always been thought by Conservatives to be an essential balance in a fast-moving world. If neo-Conservatives do not accept this view, what is it they do believe?

Night and Water

The street steams after rain.
Splashed bright black;
with luminous pools of orange
fallen from streetlamps
which douse the night unnaturally as the red
of a Picadilly dive.

No engines come.
The pools, which reflect in depth
but have only surface,
burn and blaze.
The ear expects, at any moment, a car.
But there is no car.
At this hour the kettles are cold.
The oil is cold in the sump.
It is quiet as an ocean floor.

Indoors, the damp works the mood of this water.
The sheets lie ready for flesh,
a clammy touch of death.
The damp's been at the salt.

In this watery night I could imagine
all my possessions, somehow fixed, in water
that does not darken what it touches,
as water will, but is scribbled with light
in the lights of safe shallows.
Warm where the sun still penetrates.
Daylight far
from the deep sea and the silence
of the life that eats there.

Graeme Hodgson

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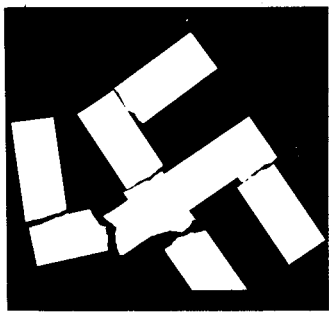
How Not to Break the Silence

On the Mystery of "the Terrible Secret"—By WALTER LAQUEUR



THIS IS A rather unhappy story of an attempt to discover the identity of an authentic hero of our time more than 40 years after the event and to obtain for him a measure of belated recognition.

The story begins some seven years ago, when I was engaged in research on how the information of Hitler's Holocaust first reached the West.[1] It had been known since the end of World War II that the "mysterious messenger" who carried the information to Switzerland in July 1942 was a prominent German industrialist. But his name had remained a secret. The handful of individuals who had known of his secret (and treasonable) mission had been sworn to secrecy: never, under any circumstances, were they to reveal his identity. Only one of them was still alive 40 years later; and while he was willing to talk to me at great length and with great courtesy, he steadfastly refused to reveal the wartime secret.

The affair greatly intrigued me. I well understood that secrecy had been a matter of life-and-death while the Nazis were still in power. But the insistence on keeping the secret even after 1945 was baffling. After the War, a variety of persons claimed to have opposed Nazism in conditions of great danger, claims which on further scrutiny all too often evaporated into thin air. For reasons I could not fathom, this real hero had wanted to remain anonymous. There was bound to be a reason—a secret within a secret.

I started on a quest which was to last for more than a year, a search which led me into several countries, with countless letters written and phone-calls made. I had a few leads from the beginning. The unknown man was "a major industrialist", employing some 30,000 people. . . . I knew that he visited Switzerland several times each year, and I also came to know by accident, that his name began with the letter *S*.

This narrowed down the number of possibilities; but there were still too many of them, and no certainty at all. Every now and then I believed I had found "the mystery man"; but in the end something did not quite fit, and I had to continue the quest. My persistence baffled my friends. Was it really worth devoting so much time and energy to what, in the final analysis, was only a minor footnote to the history of World War II? I am not sure I had a plausible answer, except that I was annoyed at my failure, that playing the role of an historical detective provided some satisfactions (and that incidentally I made a number of other, minor discoveries). But all the research in the archives, all the inquiries by letter and telephone, proved fruitless. And since most of the contemporaries of my mystery man were no longer alive, the chances of ever solving the riddle seemed dim. I had learned, too, that he was now dead.

One day in Zurich a friend mentioned to me the name of "a great expert in the field of metallurgy" who had also been a major figure in the German business world, a man of many parts—a certain Professor Messner. I contacted him, and he told me without hesitation that Dr Eduard Schulte was the man I was looking for. He had been the head of one of Germany's biggest corporations, producing non-ferrous metals. My meeting with Messner in Zurich took place a few days before my book *The Terrible Secret* (1980) went to press. There was just enough time to mention Schulte's name—together with two or three other possible candidates—in a hurried footnote. Still, I could not be certain that the riddle had been solved.

I HAD OTHER commitments which made it impossible for me to pursue the search. A few years passed. My book had stimulated interest in "the mysterious messenger" and in 1983, more or less simultaneously, two young American professors found confirmation that Schulte had indeed been the man we were looking for. One found the evidence in recently declassified files in the National Archives in Washington ("U.S. Legation Berne"); the other in the *Yad Veshem* archives in Jerusalem.

Soon afterwards Professor Richard Breitman—one of the discoverers, an historian at American University in Washington—suggested to me that we ought to join forces in an attempt to find out more about Schulte. Eventually, perhaps, his biography could be written. I hesitated: I was involved in several other projects. Furthermore, I was not at

[1] See in ENCOUNTER, July 1980, my article "Hitler's Holocaust: Who Knew What, When & How?"

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all certain that it would be possible to find out much more about an individual who had tried so hard, and quite successfully, to cover his traces.

Would it, in any case, be of sufficient contemporary interest? For all we knew, Dr Schulte had been a quite unremarkable man but for that brief moment of his wartime appearance on the historical stage. In the end, our curiosity prevailed. There was the instinctive feeling that his role *must have been* more important; in any case, his motives and the circumstances of his mission could be of historic interest. It was decided that Professor Breitman would continue his search mainly in various archives; while I would try to find members of Schulte's family (if any had survived), his friends, acquaintances, and business associates—or their descendants. Perhaps enough information could be collected, after all, to compose a more or less detailed picture of the man: what had he been like? how had he received his information? why had he risked his life?

One of the reasons which induced me was personal and quite sentimental. As a small boy in pre-War Germany, on my way to my school in Breslau,[2] I had passed every morning the building in which the headquarters of Giesche—the name of Schulte's firm—were located. Not once had I wondered what went on behind the façade of that impressive building. Perhaps, many years after, there would be an answer for me.

And so we went to work. Breitman searched in the National Archives (and in many collections elsewhere) persistently digging and soon finding traces in various directions, ranging from Averell Harriman (they had common business interests), to Hermann Goering (who wanted money for the struggling Nazi Party), to Allen Dulles who had acted as US legal adviser for Giesche before the War, and during it was one of Schulte's contacts in Switzerland. It is very difficult in this modern world for any person to disappear altogether, however hard he may try. Ubiquitous bureaucracies watch our movements; their records can still be found, and in the most unexpected places.

I was at first less successful. To be sure, there was a widow, Schulte's second wife, living in a hotel on the Dolder, near Zurich. But she refused to see me, having promised her husband never to reveal his secrets. Since I was not certain how much she knew, I simply took no for an answer. But, soon after, the breakthrough came. There happens to be a surviving son. He was my age; having graduated from school he went to work on a farm, was drafted into the German Army, was wounded several times, became an officer—and at the end of the War found himself in Switzerland, where he married an American girl who worked in the US Legation. Many years later he had emigrated to the United States.

As soon as I possibly could, I visited him in the house he had built in the mountains of Southern California, not far from San Diego. He was, I noted, a little suspicious at first; but after a few minutes we found that in fact we had been class-mates! He concluded that a man who at the age of six to nine had attended the Zawadski School for Boys and Girls in the Kleinburg district of Breslau could not be all bad.

He shared with me his knowledge. It was very detailed—not so much about Schulte the carrier of state secrets, but about the father, the captain of industry, the human being. We walked and talked for hours, on more than one occasion.

I then went to a small West German town in Eastern Westfalia, where I was the guest of Schulte's younger brother—a man in his mid-nineties but still vigorous, alert, and full of stories about "the old days". (As I write these lines, I am told that he has just died.) Here, too, I was thoroughly looked over; but apparently I inspired some confidence, and I was admitted to the family circle and to the family records. From Arnsberg I went to Lugano, where I spent a day with the former lawyer and diplomat who as an *Abwehr* officer in 1943 had warned Schulte that the *Gestapo* were about to arrest him, and had thus enabled him to cross the Swiss border "with a few hours to spare". (Allen Dulles's words in a cable to the Office of Strategic Services headquarters in Washington). In Stuttgart, Frankfurt, London, Zurich, Geneva, San Francisco, I met men and women who had known him. One of my most valuable sources I met by sheer accident in Central Park South—next door to the Manhattan hotel in which I was staying.

Gradually a picture emerged of a man who, unbeknownst to his friends, his family, his colleagues, and Hitler's Nazi rulers, had played a role of considerable importance in transmitting information to the Allies—not just about the "Final Solution" in July 1942 but on many other occasions throughout the War. Historical detectives, in their excitement, tend to be carried away and to exaggerate the importance of their discoveries; I tried hard not to commit this mistake. But after analysing and re-analysing the evidence we had gathered, Breitman and I concluded that we had stumbled on a figure of some contemporary importance. If Allen Dulles had perhaps exaggerated the role of "*509*" (the code number given by the US Office of Strategic Services to Schulte), surely Hitler and Himmler knew what they were doing when they appointed a special investigation team, a *Sonderkommando*, to investigate the elusive "*509*". How had a man with sources so close to the *Führer* been active for so long? And how much damage had been caused?

Eduard Schulte was born in 1891 in a Protestant upper-middle-class family in Düsseldorf. At a fairly early age he had shown pronounced gifts of leadership and business acumen. He finished his law degree in record time, but his heart was not in academic studies. He knew that the new generation of captains of industry needed the "*Herr Doktor*". He lost a leg in an accident, and was unable to serve in the army during World War I; but at the age of 25 he was appointed head of a key department in the German Ministry of Supply—which had been organised by Walter Rathenau. As the War ended he became chief

[2] See my article, "Homecoming", Encounter, December 1963.

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executive officer of a big corporation, Sunlicht—the German branch of Sunlight—and then, in 1925, of Giesche. This German conglomerate was not nearly so well known as Krupp or Thyssen, but it was still one of the most substantial European companies and certainly the oldest (when its history was first published before World War I, three hefty volumes proved to be just sufficient to cover the essential facts).

Giesche was in bad shape when Schulte took over, partly because of a fall in the price of tin (the firm's main product), partly because (after the Versailles Peace Treaty) some of its key holdings were in Poland, and this caused untold complications. Following some deft manoeuvring, Schulte succeeded in saving the company; and he persuaded the US company Anaconda Copper and also a leading British firm (Brandes Goldschmidt) to invest in it. By 1933 Giesche was again going strong; and when, in February 1933, Goering convened a small circle of leading bankers and industrialists to meet the *Führer*, Schulte was among those invited to the meeting in the *Reichstag*. (This was a few days before it burned down.)

Schulte was not a man of deep political interests; and yet, unlike many of his peers, he did not for a moment believe that the Nazis were worthy of support. Being a man of firm beliefs and values, with an acute sense of right and wrong, the more he learned about Adolf Hitler and his followers, the more he came to dislike the *Reich*'s new rulers. He was also a man of uncommon common sense and foresight, and even by 1933-34 he had reached the conclusion that "Hitler meant war", and that this horrific war would result in Germany's ruin.

He was, then, a rare bird. A German patriot; a man of wealth; not a drop of Jewish blood in his veins; no pacifist (or masonic) connections; no particular sympathies for Left-wing policies; and yet consumed with a deep hatred against the Nazis. He could have sat out the War in Germany, like so many in the so-called "inner emigration"; or perhaps in Switzerland, where he had frequent business dealings and was a welcome guest. But Schulte was one of nature's activists; his being revolted against passivity. He decided from the first day of the War to do all he could to shorten it, and to pass on to the Allies information about Hitler's impending attacks, about the *V* (miracle) weapons; about deliberations and changes in the German High Command.

WHY WAS Schulte's mission to Switzerland in July 1942 of such crucial importance? There had been throughout 1941 alarming reports, based on reliable information, from observers in various parts of Eastern Europe that many, perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews had been killed by special Nazi police units, the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*. But the general impression in the Allied capitals was that these were "mere pogroms", albeit on a larger and more murderous scale than ever before. True, *Ultra* intercepts in Bletchley showed that something far more sinister was going on, but British Intelligence chose not to pass on this information.

Schulte learned through his contacts in Hitler's headquarters that the *Führer* had decided to exterminate within a short time all of European Jewry. He had yet another source of information. His company had major holdings in and around Auschwitz, and by macabre accident Himmler had recently dined with his local commanders on the outskirts of Auschwitz, in a villa which Schulte's corporation (and its American associates) had had built for their executives.

Schulte took the next train to Zurich and alerted a Jewish businessman, Koppelman, who had acted as a conduit to the Allies on several previous occasions. Koppelman informed Benjamin Sagalowitz, the Press Officer of the Swiss Jewish communities (whom he located with some difficulty in a Lausanne hotel where he was participating in the final rounds of the Swiss national chess championship). Sagalowitz in his turn telephoned young Dr Gerhardt Riegner, the Geneva-based representative of the World Jewish Congress. For several hours the two walked the lakeside promenade, debating whether the horrific information was trustworthy. . . . In the end they decided to send a cable through American diplomatic channels. The US State Department intervened, and delayed transmission as long as possible, but Dr Riegner had taken the precaution of sending a second copy of what has become known as "the Riegner telegram" to the Labour MP Sidney Silverman, in London. The Foreign Office was unenthusiastic but reached the conclusion that a communication to a Member of Parliament was privileged and could not simply be shelved. Thus, because of Schulte, the shattering and world-historic news of genocide reached New York and Washington in early August of 1942.

The warning that "the extermination of European Jewry" had been ordered by Hitler was just one of many messages Schulte passed on—albeit the most dramatic one. He was not a spy in the usual sense. No one had ever asked him for information; no control officer was "running" him; he did not belong to any "network"; and he never took a penny for his labours. He transmitted his information in most cases to the man who was in charge of Polish Intelligence in Switzerland, who passed it on to London; later on his contact was with Allen Dulles who had arrived with the famous "last train" from Vichy France (just before the Unoccupied Zone was invaded in late 1942).

SCHULTE HAD TO ESCAPE from Germany in November 1943, following an almost fatal mishap. Dulles had asked him to put on paper his ideas for post-War reconstruction. But the secretary in Schulte's office had a German boyfriend who belonged to the *SS* (he was attached to the German consulate in Zurich); and she passed a carbon copy on to him. Influential friends in the *Abwehr* High Command got wind of his impending arrest, warned him, and after a dramatic escape Schulte found himself in Switzerland. He was a master of dissimulation. He faked a severe heart attack, had to be hospitalised, and after that pretended to be so ill that he could not be moved. He was evidently not "a defector", but apparently a desperately sick man stranded in Zurich.

This masquerade helped to save his wife and the highly-placed friends who had, over the years, helped him to gather his information in the Third *Reich*. By that time the *Gestapo* knew that he had been "disloyal to the Régime" but they still

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had no inkling of the full extent of his activities. Although they suspected that "*509*" was indeed Schulte, there was no conclusive evidence. He had obliterated his traces so well that there was no way of proving him guilty—except through an admission under torture. Since he was so ill and outside their grasp, the *Gestapo* had to postpone the interrogation to another day—and that day never came.

WHEN THE WAR ENDED Eduard Schulte was asked by the Americans to return to Berlin, to serve as head of a group of German economic advisers to the military government. In the normal course of events he would have become the first Minister of Economics in a new German government. But Schulte had no political ambitions; and being a rich man he did not need a civil servant's salary. He refused to accept money for his work in Berlin; he simply saw it as his duty to help his country in the hour of total disaster, the *Jahr Null* which he had sadly predicted.

But his work in Berlin soon came to an abrupt end. Every German without distinction had to undergo official investigation by the Allies—this was the period of the famous Questionnaire, the *Fragebogen* (about which Ernst von Salomon wrote a best-selling book). One American investigator, new to Germany and Nazi affairs, made a shattering discovery. During the War, in the course of official correspondence with some Berlin Ministry, Schulte had signed a letter "*Heil Hitler*". Surely such a man was a fanatical Nazi and had to be purged? It was pointless to explain that during the Nazi era the use of "*Heil Hitler*" was obligatory in official correspondence. The investigators knew better. They even tried (unsuccessfully) to identify Averell Harriman and other prominent Americans who had been in touch with Schulte as "suspected Nazi collaborators". At this stage Schulte was so disgusted that he decided to leave Germany forever.

He settled in Switzerland, found some happiness in a second marriage, and dabbled in various business ventures—more as a kind of occupational therapy than because he needed the money. He died in 1966, a few days before his 75th birthday. It was a very quiet and private funeral, with only a few letters of condolence. There were no wreaths from the Allied governments, or from Bonn, or from Israeli and Jewish institutions. I am sure that Schulte would not have wanted it any differently. He had done his duty; he did not seek recognition.

AFTER SOME HESITATION we decided to call our book on Schulte *Breaking the Silence*, for this had been his intention when he came to Zurich in July 1942 with the monstrous information which both the Allies and the Jewish institutions found so difficult to accept. It proved to be a prophetic title in more senses than one. Our book appeared in the United States early in 1986. As so often in such cases, a few weeks after the publication date we received important further evidence from the Swiss state archives and from individuals (which we would have dearly liked to have used when we were writing the book). If it did not materially affect our story, still it confirmed it; and there were also additional details shedding more light on the motives and the behaviour of this extraordinary man.

In October 1986 the book was published in West Germany and in Britain. The reception in America was, I must confess, slightly disappointing. True, there were letters both from friends and from readers unknown to us, saying that they had been "deeply moved" by the story. There were even a few long-distance phone calls from Hollywood. After all, there had been in the *Reich* a great many Kurt Waldheims—and very few individuals who had risked their lives trying to oppose the régime. The reviewers were respectful, but most did not quite know how to handle this particular piece of history. There was a certain uneasiness. Was it really an authentic story? There had been so many forgeries—including, indeed, the so-called Hitler diaries. How could one know for sure? There was no way a reviewer could "check it out", and so they were cautious in their comments. German-language readers were not very different—with a few important exceptions (the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*). One American reviewer, himself the scion of a rich family, wrote that he could not *really* understand Schulte's motives. The man had been, after all, a passionate hunter, and perhaps he had been afraid that after the War, in an impoverished Germany, he would no longer be able to pursue his hobby? An academic noted that it had been wrong to put, in a few instances, quotation marks around what should have been indirect speech. How very true, and how very pedantic.

But I must record that most newspapers and periodicals chose to ignore it. For the liberal Left, an industrialist was an unlikely hero. Had he been of working-class origin, we might have fared better. For the German Right he was little better than "a traitor"; however repulsive Nazi rule had been, a good German simply should not have collaborated with Germany's enemies. Reception in Jewish circles was equally lukewarm. There were doubts whether the story was really true; it did not fit existing stereotypes. What had been the real motives of this unusual German? And why had he refused to claim any credit? Large excerpts from the book were published in the Israeli press; someone even suggested that a street in Tel Aviv be named after him. Or perhaps a small forest be planted in the hills? After a few weeks the idea was dropped. There was apparently a long queue of meritorious applicants for street names and forests who had helped the Jewish people or the state of Israel in one way or another; and Eduard Schulte's prospects in that distinguished company were not very promising.

MOST EXTRAORDINARY was the reception in Britain—where the book did not receive a single major review (with the exception of *The Economist*, an Anglo-American rather than a British periodical). True, the BBC had devoted a long radio programme to Schulte when the story first broke, a year before the book came out (they even sent a correspondent to California to interview his son). But not a single British national newspaper reviewed *Breaking the Silence*. In the

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light of literary experience, I find this unusual. Authors have no divine right to expect attention for their books, but they are bound to ask themselves what the reasons for their failure might have been. Relating the story of an unknown hero many years after the event is not an enterprise of world-shaking importance. Still, at a time when Britain's Sunday newspapers were publishing long excerpts from new books relating for the tenth time the life story of Anthony Blunt, and for the twentieth time the Blake affair, when day after day there were long reports on the front pages from Australia about a book on Roger Hollis that had as yet not even been published, how was one to explain the absence of even a single line to report a story which, if nothing else, was of a certain human interest?

It could have been mere "accident". I discussed the problem with some friends, and they mentioned similar recent experiences. There was the affair of the "Griffin", alias Paul Rosbaud. A distinguished American scientist had recently uncovered the identity of the man who had been Britain's most important scientific source in Germany—the man who had passed invaluable material to the Allies throughout the War. Rosbaud settled in London in 1945 and (together with Robert Maxwell) founded the Pergamon Press, but their collaboration did not last long. The book has now been translated into ten languages, including Norwegian; but no British publisher has showed interest. (I understand that the tenth publisher who was approached has just, very sensibly indeed, decided to publish the book.) Then there was the case of the definitive biography of Chaim Weizmann by Professor Yehuda Reinharz, a professor at the University of Michigan, which was published by Oxford University Press in New York and London. The author received several important awards in the United States and his book was highly praised. In Britain, however, not one review, despite the fact that Dr Weizmann had been a British citizen, had taught at a British university, had made an important contribution to the British war effort, had been a confidant of leading British politicians; and, generally speaking, had been an ardent Anglophile all his life.

There were other such cases, and they pointed to several conclusions—that parochialism is on the rise (admittedly not only in Britain), that interest in events which lie 50 years or more in the past is strictly limited, unless the books refer to some prominent Establishment (or anti-Establishment) figure in politics and literature. Above all, the lesson seems to be that a meretricious interest in scandals, disasters, and debunking has become considerably greater not only in the press but in publishing as a whole. Eduard Schulte was not a saint but he was, on the whole, what the Russians used to call "a positive hero": the rare figure of a man standing up for his beliefs and willing to risk his life. In an age in which there is much greater interest in traitors, collaborators, and similar villains, perhaps editors and publishers are right: perhaps the stories of good people do tend to be boring. We should pay more attention to Shakespeare: "Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues we write in water. . . ."

But I still am persuaded that a debt had to be paid. Even though we failed to get full recognition for Eduard Schulte, the messenger of a tragic truth, I am glad we wrote this book.

AUTHORS

Harvey Tyson's article is based on remarks made to "Challenging the Censors", a World News Media Action Conference (organised by the World Press Freedom Committee) held recently in London.

A. S. Byatt's story is included in her collection *Sugar and Other Stories*, published in April by Chatto & Windus, who also published her novels *Still Life* (1985) and *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978).

Allen Curnow's latest book of poems is *The Loop in Lone Kauri Road*, published last year by Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press.

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Vernon Bogdanor, Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, is the author of *The People and the Party System* and *Multi-Party Politics and the Constitution* (Cambridge University Press, 1981, 1983), *Changing British and American Party Systems* (Praeger, 1984) and *What is Proportional Representation?* (Martin Robertson, 1984); he is co-editor of *Democracy and Elections* (CUP, 1983) and *Coalition Government in Western Europe* (Praeger, 1984). His articles in ENCOUNTER include "Drawing the Lines" (September-October, 1986) and "Peering Through the Privet" (January 1985).

Richard Mayne, Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER, is the author, among other works, of *The Recovery of Europe* (Weidenfeld and Harper & Row, 1970), and *Postwar* (Thames and Hudson, 1983). He has also edited *The Handbook of Western Europe*, published in 1986 by Muller, Blond & Briggs.

Anthony Hartley, for several years editor of *Interplay* in New York, is a political writer living in London. Among his books are *A State of England* (1983) and *Gaullism* (1973); he was co-editor of *The Penguin Book of French Verse*. His articles in ENCOUNTER include "Eco's Great Mystery" (March 1984), "Bishops, Politicians, & Spiritual Times" (March 1985), "From Disraeli to Thatcher" (April 1986), and "Does The Ambassador Have a Future?" (March 1987).

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Max Beloff, Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79, was created a life peer in 1981. His most recent books are *Wars and Welfare, Britain 1914-1945* (Edward Arnold, 1984) and, as co-author, *The Government of the United Kingdom* (Weidenfeld, 1985).

Walter Laqueur is a Professor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University and Chairman of its International Research Council; he is also co-director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London. His numerous books include *A World of Secrets* (Basic Books and Weidenfeld, 1986), *Germany Today* (Weidenfeld, 1985), *Young Germany* (Transaction Books, 1985), *The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World* (Praeger, 1983), and *The Terrible Secret* (Weidenfeld, 1980). *Breaking the Silence* was published last year in London by The Bodley Head and in New York by Simon & Schuster.

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LETTERS

Steiner's "Holocaust"

IN YOUR March issue you published a letter from me grumbling about the élitist and anti-Socialist characteristics of ENCOUNTER. I take it all back. Be as nasty to the Left as you like as long as you go on publishing such deep, such unforgettable articles as George Steiner's on the Holocaust ("The Long Life of Metaphor", February). I'm sending for copies to pass on to friends. If they don't understand it, they'll at least be made to realise by contrast how small and boringly we think in England now.

REX GIBSON

Snowshill
Worcestershire

Of "Wops" & "Kikes"

THE REFERENCE BY Richard Mayne (in "Column", ENCOUNTER, February) to ethnic insults like "*wop*" for Italians, "*sheeny*" or "*yid*" or "*kike*" for Jews, *etc.* and *ad nauseam*, raises a number of interesting questions about their lexical origins and derivations. Etymology is not a branch of ethics, but verbal self-consciousness may help to "relativise" usage and pacify some epithets.

On the subject of "*Wop*" the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933) merely notes it as a "term of contempt, U.S. slang". The *Supplement* (vol. 13, p. 320) quotes P. G. Wodehouse's *Psmith Journalist* of 1915: "He's a wop kid" and also Sinclair Lewis in 1928: "Too many foreigners—fellows with Wop names and Hunkey [Hungarian] names. . . ." But I believe that Eric Partridge in his *Dictionary of Slang* (1961) was the first to register its derivation from the Spanish "*guapo*", presumably due to the Spanish imperial domination of so many Italian lands (Naples, etc.). But *guapo* signified "a dandy", and well-dressed Spanish courtiers might well not have been offended, although in Northern and indeed English eyes it would have had increasingly negative overtones.

So—as Luigi Barzini, who grew up in New York City, recorded in his American memoir—kids on the streets beat themselves to a pulp for "ethnic honour" when the taunt of "Wop!" was heard. The battle was over a word in another language and referred to a style not remotely their own. The Italians were also stuck with another accidental "insult", *dago*, which was derived from a corruption (*OED*, vol. 3, p. 8) of "*Diego*, an equivalent of *James*". What's in a name? A bloody nose.

Noses were also bloodied—as Melvin J. Lasky observes in his account of the "Falashas" in Israel (ENCOUNTER, January), when young Tel Aviv schoolboys called the black Ethiopian pupils "*Cushies*". What should have been in a name? At the very least a badge of honour—for *Cush* is referred to in the Bible as a land from which a "lost tribe" of the Jews, according to a divine prophecy, would one day return to Zion.

The Jews, in the perspective of 2,000 years of persecution, were more sinned against than sinning, and were often the victims of the strangest, most ironic and paradoxical terminological insults. One of the most vicious terms of disparagement was—and indeed is—"*kike*". To be called a "*yid*" is, by comparison, a mild and Dickensian term of disparagement; for it is an obvious derivation from the German *Jude*, and is a name by which Jews often refer to each other (often in Eastern Europe pronounced "*yeed*"). Thus it has no secret power for the ultimate in viciousness. In my view this requires a grotesque verbal transformation, with a subconscious or unconscious twisting of innocent meanings into pernicious, primitive tags.

"Kike" is perhaps the most dramatic example of this dialectic of opprobrium. What mediocrity attaches to other unpleasant designations!—to such epithets as "*Heinies*" for the Germans (or "Jerries" or "Krauts", *ex sauerkraut*); "*Frogs*" for the French (*ex grenouille*); "*Limies*" for the English (*ex* citrus fruits); "nigger" for the Africans (*ex* Negro *ex* black). The special perverse power for hurt and harm of "*kike*" must come from its derivation from what Plato called the most beautiful thing in the universe, namely the form of a *circle*!

Here there is some dispute among the experts. In his book *Our Crowd* (1967) Stephen Birmingham—following H. L. Mencken—records the history of Jewish families in New York and how the Ashkenazi names ending with *-sky* or *-ski* turned into the neologism via repetition-play of "*kee-kees*" etc.

Leo Rosten begs to differ. In his *Joys of Yiddish* (1968) Rosten offers a lexigraphical alternative which, if not exactly joyful, has this built-in ironic ultimate, which features in all the best, or worst, ethnic insults.

When the great waves of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived on Ellis Island (in New York harbour) during the decades before the First World War, an official registration form was required to be signed. The Jews were unable to fill in the form or to sign it. Some may have been illiterate; but even the literate ones wrote not in Roman-English letters but in Hebrew script (even when the language was Yiddish). The customary *X* was rejected: making a cross would be anathema. Thus they were encouraged to sign with a circle, an innocent *O*, which in the Yiddish vocabulary is known as a *keikel*, a little circle being a *keikeleh*. As Rosten explains:

> "Before long the immigration inspectors (on Ellis Island) were calling anyone who signed with an 'O' instead of an 'X' a *kikel* or *kikeleh* or *kikee* or, finally and succinctly, *kike*. . . .
>
> Why did Jews make an 'O', never an 'X'? Because of the profound fear, not to say revulsion, felt for the symbol of the cross—which to them represented not only a barbaric form of execution (which they never practised), but the very sign under which they themselves had been persecuted, and their ancestors brutalised and slaughtered. . . .
>
> And so those who drew *kikelehs*, on Ellis Island or wherever the hardy peddlers travelled (signing account books with a little circle), came to be known as '*kike* men' or '*kikes*'. . . ."

Thus did Plato's "most beautiful and ideal form" get redrawn into the tragic Western history of ethnic prejudice.

JOHN L. MCALLISTER

Oxford

Will a Reformed Gorbachov Régime Be "Co-existable"?

Dilemmas & Dangers of Change—By GEORGE URBAN

LORD GLADWYN (Letters, ENCOUNTER, February) raises a number of subtle questions about the desirability of co-existence with the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachov.

Although virtually no one in the Western world now advocates the warlike elimination of the Soviet threat to the non-Soviet world, it nevertheless continues to be in the interest of the Western democracies to weaken the reach of Soviet expansionism and undermine Soviet domestic strength by *unwarlike* means. If that is what Lord Gladwyn has in mind when he mentions "*Zusammenleben*", I am all for it.

But here we run into a problem. The leader of the Western Alliance is a poor and unwilling player in using unwarlike instruments of power such as "public diplomacy", propaganda, and subversion to end Soviet subversion. How, one may ask, does any US administration propose to bring pressure to bear

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on the *glacis* of the far-away Soviet empire, seeing that the US has been incapable of dislodging victorious incursions of Communist power from its own "backyard" in neighbouring Cuba and Nicaragua?

The Iranian arms sale fiasco and its impact on "Contra" forces on the borders of Nicaragua have made it clear yet again that the American constitutional system is an obstacle to the conduct of a successful Western security policy. More particularly, it deprives US administrations of most of those unconventional tools of policy which great powers have always had to use in a cruel world—and which no leading power can hope to do without in its contest with the Soviet Union, whether we append to that contest the name of Cold War or (in Khrushchev's phrase) "competitive coexistence".

IT IS THIS self-inflicted American inhibition, and not the Soviet menace alone, that now threatens to engulf us all in some future disaster, because it is making it all but impossible for American Presidents to use the middle ground between doing nothing and all-out war.

It is tempting but not fair to blame allegedly irresponsible or fatigued Presidents for the unworldliness of American foreign policy. Zbigniew Brzezinski, for example, puts the blame for "Irangate" on "operational shortcomings" and the "fragmentation of decision-making" (*The Times*, 16 December 1986). Not so. The sober fact seems to be that the American system, with duality (or worse) built into the conduct of foreign policy, is unequal to the demands the modern world makes on a world power, no matter who is President.

The USA is an empire without the consciousness of empire. It has never been able to make up its mind whether it is a moral or a military power. That *indecision is costing her—and us—dear*. If missiles are ever fired in anger between America and the Soviet Union, it will be precisely because the American system has outlawed the means of "peaceful coexistence" as these have to be understood in the real world between great powers.

ONE ANSWER I would, therefore, offer to Lord Gladwyn's plea for "coexistence" is: I can well imagine that the Soviets under Gorbachov may now find it to be in their interest to have a prolonged truce with us—but I am not sure that it is in the Western interest to agree to such a truce so long as we have not mastered the means that would make "coexistence" worth having. In other words, we need a "peace strategy" before we can embark on peace with the Soviet Union. Under an earlier version of "*Zusammenleben*", the *détente* of the 1970s, we saw the Soviet Union transform itself into an expansionist maritime empire. Do we want to invite a repetition of that experience?

BUT GIVEN the fact that the American people are unlikely to scrap, evade, or reform the US Constitution; or to decide that one American government is enough when they can have two; or (*horribile dictu*) to discipline the American press; and given that an expansionistic Soviet empire will go on facing a self-debilitated America which will not assume the role of empire, what is it that the Western Alliance can do to have a measure of coexistence with the Soviet Union and its own libertarian conscience?

First: we can and must recognise that our conflict with the Soviet system will be a permanent feature of our lives until the system, in time to come, collapses under the weight of its own inadequacies or is forced to reform itself into something so non-totalitarian (if such can be realistically imagined) that it will cease to be a threat to our interests. Second: in the meantime we can and must maximise our strengths, and exploit and sharpen the weaknesses of Soviet society. Given the character of nuclear weapons and the San Andreas Fault in American democracy, we cannot do more. Given the nature of the Soviet system, we dare not do less.

To be more explicit: (*1*) The Soviet desire for a prolonged truce under Gorbachov is, on all past evidence, yet another *reculer pour mieux sauter*. It is not in our interest to help the USSR to leap better now or at any time in the future. The "Strategic Defence Initiative" is even now a brake—and may well prove to be more and more of a brake—on Soviet ambitions, both *domestic and foreign. If the Soviet* leaders are now caught in the awesome dilemma of either giving their own people "a better deal" *or* matching the American space programme, we must take care to do nothing to lessen their predicament. The very possibility of SDI has already and visibly caused the Soviet leaders a great deal of anguish. As SDI itself comes closer to realisation, the strain on Soviet society will get worse—and the Soviet ability to make trouble for the rest of the world diminish. Soviet inactivity on the world stage in the 1930s is evidence that, given sufficient turbulence on the home front, the Soviet Union need not be a menace to democratic societies, although we can never be quite sure what a domestically frustrated but militarily powerful Soviet élite might do to sustain its title to legitimacy.

(*2*) Mr Gorbachov's reforms are superficially attractive on the assumption that "fat Communists" are less likely to gobble up the rest of us than "lean Communists". I am sceptical. An efficiently-run Soviet system would be a substantially greater danger to the Western world than the slum-empire we are now facing. The Soviet Union is currently a threat to us on two fronts only: the military and the subversive. This, one might say, is enough.

But imagine a Soviet state that had had pragmatic, circumspect, non-ideological, patriotic men for its leaders rather than a Stalin who wrecked Soviet agriculture, decimated the officer corps of the Red Army, and killed off a large part of his own Party. Imagine a Soviet Politburo that had had the wisdom to allow the "Prague Spring" type of Eurocommunism to go ahead, making a reformed Soviet model attractive to the West European working class. Imagine a Soviet leadership that tolerated Poland's *Solidarity* with its great potential for unloosing the springs of Western goodwill and munificence among "capitalists" and "socialists" alike. Imagine a Soviet oil-exploration industry that was advanced enough to open up the Siberian oil fields without benefit of American drilling bits and Japanese infrastructure. Imagine a Soviet agriculture that was able to satisfy the needs of the population *and* to export large quantities of grain—as did its Czarist predecessors. Imagine a Soviet culture that took pride in the work of Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, Rostropovich and others, renewing rather than destroying the magnetism which "the Soviet model" once had for gullible Western intellectuals.

A Soviet system of that sort would be a much more formidable threat to our liberal-democratic institutions than the present socially and economically irrelevant Third World antagonist. Prudence, therefore, demands that we do nothing to jolt Soviet society out of Brezhnevite conservatism and Russian inefficiency and inactivity, and that we do not help or applaud Mr Gorbachov's reforms unless they show some promise of achieving the opposite of what they set out to achieve.

IS A "NEW DEAL" likely to happen? I have to weigh my words carefully: it might. The thrust and tone of some (not all) of Gorbachov's suggested reforms appear to be so much at variance with the totalitarian ways of the Soviet system and the ethos of Russian society that they will either suffer shipwreck on the resistance of the *apparat* and the incomprehension of the public, or else give rise to such wild expectations in the East European, Central Asian, and

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Baltic peripheries of the Soviet empire as to destablise the whole of it. "1956" serves as a warning.

If the first, we have reason to applaud because nothing will have changed in the bankrupt condition of Soviet society. If the second, we have reason to applaud because everything will have changed in the Soviet Union. It is in these senses that I support the policies of Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachov.

Clearly, the chancelleries of the West are not in the habit of harnessing their policies to such long-term considerations, and the statesmen who might do so are (with the exception of the British Prime Minister) conspicuous by their silence. Also, there may be short-term tactical reasons for giving Gorbachov a modicum of tacit support—by omission if not commission—in his contest with the conservative Soviet Establishment. But such short-term passive approval can make sense only if it is subordinated to the overriding purpose of helping the nations of the Soviet Union (including the Russian) to free themselves from the bondage of the Soviet system.

GEORGE URBAN

Hove
Sussex

Rothschild in Abyssinia?

I HAVE READ the admirable article by Melvin J. Lasky on the Ethiopian "Falashas" in Israel ("Strangers in a Promised Land", ENCOUNTER, January), and want to thank you for the rich detail and the critical alertness of the analysis.

But a carping people as we are, and each of us an expert on every subject under the sun from the archaeology of the Bible to the zoology of Noah's ark, I want to call your attention to one little mistake. On p. 72, it was not Baron Edmond de Rothschild who "turned up" in Abyssinia in 1905 but Jacques Faitlovich (on his famous expedition to the "lost tribe"). His trip, of course, had been funded by the Rothschilds.

JOSHUA ELLMAN

Jerusalem

Fan Letter

I RETIRED ten years ago (and now live on Social Security), but my old company did remember me this year and sent on a little bonus as a Christmas present. I accepted with pleasure and replied I would share it with one of my best friends. "Who?" they asked curiously, and I said "ENCOUNTER, of course". "But who or what is encounter?"; and I was almost inappropriately rude when confronted with so much provincialism, even ignorance. But they had been kind, and I enclose half of the small cheque; for the news of your chronic financial difficulties reaches even here, and your need mau be greater than mine.

Certainly for 35 years now ENCOUNTER has brightened my life each month! This contribution is only a small token of my gratitude and greetings. Try to avoid "liberation". Stick to "existentialism" in the very literal sense of the word. Survive and flourish.

I have been long indebted to your whole *équipe* of contributors—and oh how I miss the voice of Raymond Aron! But enough of this nostalgic appreciation. I look forward to the next issue, with eagerness as always.

JAN T. BISINSKI

Burlingame
California

The "Ethics Vacuum" in Press & Government

On Power & Expediency—By John C. Merrill

A SPATE OF articles and books has recently dissected British and American journalism and taken the press to task for ethical shortcomings. Herb Greer's series for ENCOUNTER ("The News Managers", "Who Censors What, Where & When?", and "The Ethics of Fallible Journalism", June, July-August, and December 1986) and Renate Adler's *New Yorker* discussion of the Westmoreland and Sharon trial coverage (June 1986) are good examples of the attention being given to press ethics. When we get to academic journals (a new *Media Ethics Journal* now exists in the US), and observe the books dealing with ethical problems (e.g., Tom Goldstein's *The News at Any Cost: How Journalists Compromise Their Ethics to Shape the News*, 1985) it is manifest that writers are increasingly exercised by the flaws and antics of the press.

This sense of outrage at press excesses and general alarm at the low state of press ethics seem rather strange. Journalism, it has often been noted with considerable reason, reflects the values and interests (as well as the moral level) of a society. When one looks at a press system and the content of its journalism, one can tell a great deal about the basic nature of the "people" of the society, and, indirectly, of its government.

In the US, government, the people, and the press are the trinity of an open society: this has been propounded by Locke, Jefferson, and Mill, as well as other spokesmen of the Enlightenment spirit. The absence of ethics from all three sectors has caused a kind of passivity, spreading a vacuum, a morally negative *Angst*, throughout the society.

A KIND OF Machavellianism pervades American morality and is projected into (and reflected by) the press. Achieve desired ends by using methods that bring about such ends: this is the general practical moral guideline.

The press stresses its freedom and its check-on-government role, but seems to have little concern for the people except as consumers of journalism. Little attention is given to such "rights" as "access-to-the-press" and "the-right-to-know" by a press that justifies its favoured position by appealing to its First Amendment freedom. Government generally considers this freedom a kind of dangerous and socially destabilising factor. The people, for their part, have only the "market" on their side; consumers have little leverage with a press that is becoming less and less pluralistic.

The press, because of its Constitutional protection, has the sole real power. Readers can write occasional letters; the government can classify documents and try to be secretive. But the press can fight against both government and people through its power to have the first and last word, because it is not subject to outside control and regulation.

STILL, the consuming public does bear some responsibility for the ethics of the press—and for the "ethics vacuum". The press is, indeed, a barometer or indicator of the moral level of the public. In a free-market society, it tends to adapt itself to the journalistic wishes of the public (or segments of it). If consumers want crime, sex, and other sensations, the press is likely to give it to them; it "sells" the people what they want. If the people accept sloppy reporting, unidentified sources, contradictory facts, unexplained situations, biased and unbalanced documentation, and propaganda, the press will continue to indulge in these practices. When will readers turn against shoddy and careless journalism, against lying and misrepresentations in the news, against invasion of privacy? Press ethics will improve only when the public's ethical standards improve.

Kant proclaimed that nothing can be called good, without qualification, except a good will. By stressing the-will-to-be-ethical, he demolished (or thought he did) the doctrine of utilitarianism and other teleological theories of ethics, and tied morality inextricably to the agent's motives and dedication to duty. This Kantian view of ethics is a tough one, assigning an agent moral worth only if acting from duty, from

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an obligation that must be fulfilled. Any consideration of expediency disappears from the moral arena.

Press people and government officials, by and large, conceive of ethics as prudential actions which will achieve some preconceived plan—whether this is to get information from a source, win a certain block of votes, or, for one reason or another, keep certain bits of knowledge from the public. Journalists and government officials often obtain their ends, and then justify or rationalise the means they used. Thus another Kantian dictum falls generally on deaf ears in journalism and government: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only. . . ." How foreign this ethical principle is in the typical workaday world of the journalist and government official! The name of the game in this pragmatic world is *using other people to achieve desired ends*. In obtaining news or getting to a source who can guide one to that news, or in achieving a foreign policy, journalists or government officials constantly survey the scene for persons who can usefully serve them. They operate, consciously or unconsciously, according to the old dictum: "The end justifies the means."

So we have an ethics vacuum—and the reason is simple: that is what journalists and government officials want. Being ethical is simply not the way to be "successful". Those persons who seriously want to be ethical had best stay out of both fields unless they are satisfied to sit in frustrated silence on the sidelines, unable to attain prominence in the hard-fought Machiavellian battle for power, prestige, and success. Kant's old concept of dedication to principle, of a sense of a "duty" to do the right thing regardless of the consequences, is essentially a dead concept. The "ethics vacuum" will remain with us as long as our competitive spirit militates against a strict and formalistic ethics.

John C. Merrill
Gannett Centre for Media Studies
Columbia University

"Appreciating Milosz"

Some stages of Czeslaw Milosz's public life have been more dramatic than presented by Leopold Labedz (Encounter, December).

First, the assertion, "As a student, Milosz belonged to a Left-wing group opposing the ruling régime in pre-War Poland" is rather an understatement. At that stage of his life Milosz was opposing not just the ruling régime, but the very foundations on which the Polish society and state functioned, and he took the Soviet Union as his model; in other words he was a Communist. This can be seen not only from the evidence of his contemporaries, but also from the contents of his first published volume of poetry (*A Poem on Time Frozen*, Wilno, 1933). The gist of a poem in it entitled "A Tale" is that a *Schöngeist*, living in capitalist society, who is occupied by his own sweet thoughts but does not join in the class struggle will get his throat slit in the coming revolution. In terms of the Mayakovsky-Lenin dichotomy set up by Mr Labedz, such a programme clearly belongs to the latter gentleman.

In another composition ("A Season") Milosz speaks with bitter hostility and sarcasm about the Polish Army of 1920, victorious in the war against the Soviet Russia. He accuses it of mass murder ("In a Jewish township in the middle of Belorussia a half of the population were slaughtered on the day of victory") and robbery ("every soldier had a gold watch").

Milosz (as he described in *Native Realm*) was borne into the Communist camp largely on the wings of a strong conviction of his own superiority over the surrounding bourgeois society, whom he described as "apes". But on closer acquaintance the comrades and their ways also proved inadequate, and the same modicum of ideological locomotion brought him out of their midst. Milosz's article "Conversations on the Shores of Vistula and Niemen", published in the Wilno journal *Karta* in 1936, marked his break with Communist ideology and organisation.

But he remained a socialist and admitted (again in *Native Realm*) that he could rarely reach full undertanding with people who have not passed through Marxist experience. Only in a recent article (*Kultura*, Paris, April 1986) did Milosz indicate a shift from this position, towards a more negative appreciation of Marxism.

Mr Labedz's assertion that critical attitudes to Milosz among the Poles both in Poland and abroad died down gradually is difficult to uphold—because this change occurred in one sweep, when, as a result of the Nobel Prize award, almost overnight it became an article of the Polish credo to admire Milosz as a national hero. Characteristic in this respect was the attitude of the then Primate of Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski, who switched from condemning Milosz to adulation; and also of the London *Polish Daily* newspaper, which behaved similarly.

It puzzles me how Mr Labedz reached the conclusion that "facing the problem of national identity presents Milosz with one of his crucifying choices"—when his own quotations demonstrate Milosz's clear supranational position, and there is not even a hint of suffering involved in reaching or maintaining this stand.

Finally, a small point: the French poet Oscar Milosz was Czeslaw's uncle, not cousin.

Z. A. Siemaszko
Thornton Heath
Surrey

In my essay I wrote about Czeslaw Milosz's "affinity with the Communists". Mr Siemaszko charges me with "understatement"; he says that Milosz "was a Communist", and that he made a "break with Communist ideology and organisation" in 1936. Does Mr Siemaszko have any proof that Milosz was a member of the Polish Communist Party and not just a confused young fellow-traveller?

Mr Siemaszko says that Milosz indicated his negative attitude to Marxism only recently in an article in *Kultura*. This is nonsense, as anybody can see by reading the chapter on Marxism in his *Native Realm* (1968).

Nor is it true that the change in attitude to Milosz of Poles at home and abroad "occurred in one sweep . . . as a result of the Nobel Prize award." It happened gradually, after he "chose freedom". As I wrote, as a result of his poetic achievement he became acknowledged as a leading Polish poet. The Nobel Prize was, of course, an additional stimulus.

Mr Siemaszko charges the young Milosz with "opposing not just the ruling régime [in pre-War Poland], but the very foundations on which the Polish society and state functioned, and [taking] the Soviet Union as his model." Milosz says that despite his Communist sympathies he was "an anti-Stalinist". In any case, the youthful rebellion of a political innocent against "apes" (and perhaps they were not, after all, so very attractive) hardly justifies an attack on a poet who will be read when many of his contemporaries, and his critics, have been forgotten.

Finally, a small genealogical point. The French poet Oscar Milosz was *not* Czeslaw's uncle. He was *the only son* of Wladyslaw Milosz and Miriam Rozenthal, the daughter of a Jewish schoolteacher. An only son can hardly be an uncle. Czeslaw Milosz explains that the poet "considered me as his nephew, a designation not altogether accurate, as the degree of our kinship was more distant" (*Native Realm*, p. 30).

Leopold Labedz
London

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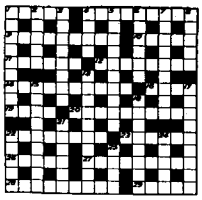
Life & Letters Today

New York City



CROSSWORD TOURS: **"Why [James Hoover writes] has no one arranged a tour for crossword puzzle fans so they could see the places that they have read—and written—about so often? The group could head for the Moslem world to visit Oran, Oman and Iran. Then up to the Soviet Union for a look at the Aral, the Ural and the Orel.**

On the return leg, the busy group might swim in the Aare, the Eure and the Aire. After hearing an oratorio by Arne, they would sail home from Eire and hope for a glimpse of an erne. . . ."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

OH! OH! *What is happening to BBC pronunciation? Many reporters and readers lately have been talking of "***covert***" operations by the Americans in Iran—and pronouncing the word with a long "***o***", as in "oh" or "Sebastian Coe". This is not a pronunciation admitted by the Oxford dictionaries [Derwent May writes].*

Wednesday night's BBC-1 "9 O'Clock News" showed why this has been happening. Three Americans in turn pronounced the word that way. The American Webster's does, in fact, allow the pronunciation as an alternative. But it is not English and should not be used by British speakers on the BBC.

*The same bulletin included another error of precisely the same kind—perhaps by magnetic attraction. The newsreader put a long "***o***" into the noun, "***a project***".*

There is still a BBC Pronunciation Unit. It obviously needs to throw a few heavy dictionaries at some BBC talking heads.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Luxembourg

EURODREAMS: *A printed note is circulating among Common Market staff in Luxembourg. It states:*

"Heaven is where the police are British, the cooks French, the mechanics German, the lovers Italian, and it is all organised by the Swiss.

Hell is where the chefs are British, the mechanics French, the lovers Swiss, the police German, and it is all organised by the Italians."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Washington D.C.

JOYCEAN: *The subjunctive is alive and well and living in the language. At an Oxford University Press symposium at the Library of Congress, Robert Burchfield, the man who has just finished the four-volume supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, gave the subjunctive a big plug: "This very useful verbal distinction is not at all tottering towards extinction."*

If it were not for the subjunctive, we would be less able to express desire, supposition, doubt; more important, we would find it hard to set up a situation contrary to fact—a shocker, something ridiculous—to see how we would deal with it. However, the subjunctive mood is getting kicked around and needs a few defenders.

Before we start [William Safire writes], let's settle the tangential business of **as if** *and* **as though**. *They are interchangeable. I prefer* **if** *because it is so clearly iffy; the archaic "if" sense of* **though** *has atrophied over the centuries, and is preserved only in this phrase, but* **as though** *is not incorrect; it's not as though it were a big deal.*

What is a big grammatical deal is the mood of the verb that follows the **if**. *Assume you're setting up a situation that ain't so; the signal you send to the reader not to believe what he sees is the subjunctive mood—not* **is** *or* **was**, *but the subjunctive* **were**.

The distinction between subjunctive mood and indicative mood remains useful. A law professor testified at a recent congressional hearing that Senator John C. Danforth's Product-Liability Bill "reads as though it were written by James Joyce." Obviously, the bill was not written by the author of "Ulysses", so the don't-you-believe-it subjunctive **were** *was necessary.*

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

Teheran

RADICAL ANTI-CHIC: **Iran's Islamic parliament has passed a bill empowering revolutionary courts to flog people wearing "indecent" clothes or make-up in public.**

FINANCIAL TIMES

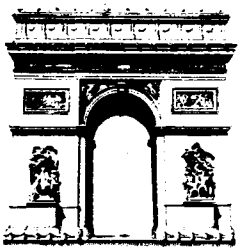
New York City

DRACO: *Indefatigable researchers at the "Wall Street Journal" have charted 738 uses of the word* **"draconian"** *in newspapers and magazines in seven weeks. The rebirth of the spirit of Draco, a 7th-century BC Greek who imposed the death penalty for every crime, has been inspired by the across-the-board Budget cuts imposed by Congress's new Gramm-Rudman Deficit-Reduction Law, although "Grammian" or "Rudmanian" are not ever likely to carry the same menace.*

The sudden vogue of draconian, says one academic, is because of the "tendency to use excessively vehement language in political discussion."

DAILY MAIL

London



WHAT'S IN A NAME? **We were speaking [Godfrey Smith writes] of the involuntary embarrassment given to the French by Sir Con O'Neill, whose first name means something extremely rude in their language. Even worse, as a French teacher points out to me, is the dilemma they face in speaking of Sean Connery. *Une connerie* in French is a particularly stupid piece of behaviour, but is far from polite, and the French therefore tend to call Sean simply "James Bond".**

Petula Clark, who lives and works in France, has to be careful too not to shorten her name to Pet, which means fart in French (though the French do not seem to mind so much about this word: I have heard perfectly respectable people refer to a short shirt as *un pet-en-l'air*). And then Fess Parker, the actor who played Davy Crockett, was always known as Tess Parker on French handbills (*fesse* means buttocks).

It's really a relief to turn to such a blameless language as Italian; though medical complications can arise when you try to explain here in Italian that you have a cold (*sono costipato*).

SUNDAY TIMES

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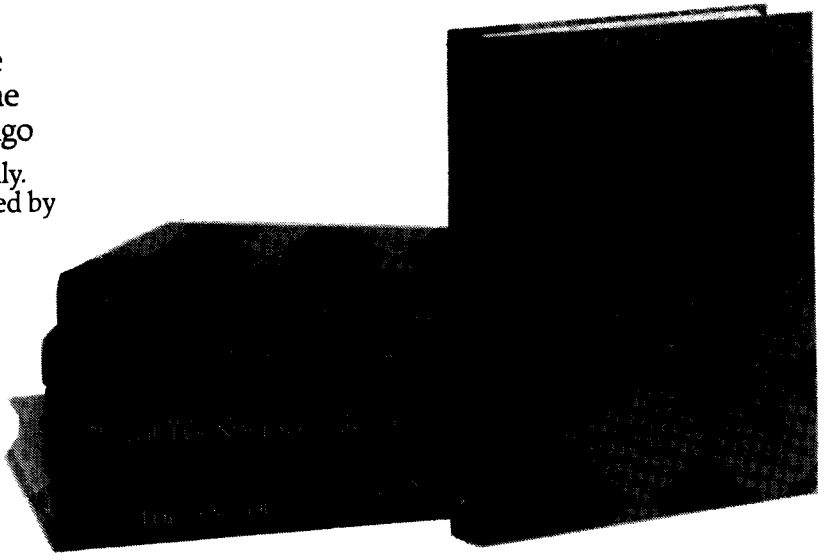

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